



Haunted Houses and Ghostly Encounters

Ethnography and Animism in East Timor,
1860–1975

Christopher J. Shepherd



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ASIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

in association with

NIAS PRESS



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First published by:

NUS Press
National University of Singapore
AS3-01-02, 3 Arts Link
Singapore 117569
Fax: (65) 6774-0652
E-mail: nusbooks@nus.edu.sg
Website: <http://nuspress.nus.edu.sg>

Published in Europe by:

NIAS Press
NIAS — Nordic Institute of Asian Studies
Øster Farimagsgade 5, DK-1353 Copenhagen K, Denmark
Tel: (+45) 3532 9501 • Fax: (+45) 3532 9549
E-mail: books@nias.ku.dk • Website: www.niaspress.dk

ISBN 978-87-7694-267-0

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Cataloguing-in-Publication Data for the book is available from the British Library.

Printed and bound in Great Britain
by Marston Book Services Limited, Oxfordshire

Dedicated to Isabel Moutinho

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Acknowledgements

I thank: Isabel Moutinho for her assistance with translations from the Portuguese, detailed reading of chapters, and constant encouragement during the writing process; Judith Bovensiepen and Ricardo Roque for their critical readings of theory and argument; Balthasar Kehi for translating Tetum verse; Kaj Århem, whose conceptual history of animism I borrowed; Mia Stephens for background material on her late mother, Margaret King-Boyes; Shepard Forman, David Hicks and Elizabeth Traube for their close reading and detailed feedback on various parts of the manuscript, including “their” chapters; Maxine Hicks and Leona Forman for providing photographs; Frederico Delgado Rosa, whose references I followed to their source; Jorge Silvas for the maps; Jason, Cok, Ally, Sally, Sam and Enna for their great assistance at The Archives of Macau; Adrienne Smith, Janine Martig, Scoresby, Anna and Louise Shepherd for proof-reading; Edward Aspinall, Andrew Walker, Paul Kratoska, Lena Qua, Lindsay Davis and all those at NUS Press for their fantastic editorial and publishing support; the then-anonymous readers, Hans Hägerdal and Douglas Kammen, whose excellent, detailed, critical reviews made this book all the richer; Rica for her companionship in Timor; and Fortunata for all the rest.

Foreword

In 1811, Bernardo José Maria de Lorena, Count of Sarzedas and Viceroy of Goa, composed a 96-point memorandum addressed to the newly appointed Governor and Captain General of Timor and Solor, Vitorino Freire da Cunha Gusmão. Maria de Lorena's aim was to provide information, culled from the extensive archives in Goa, deemed useful for the betterment of the "decadent state and neglect" in the most-distant territory administered by the Portuguese Estado da Índia. Given that the state archive in Dili, the capital of Portuguese Timor, had been destroyed in a fire, Maria de Lorena sought to recuperate the three-century history of Portuguese engagement in the Timor zone and, by extension, to offer instructions for more effective Portuguese dominion. This text, now known as the Sarzedas Document, covers the history of the Catholic orders in Timor; the civil administration; customs and the treasury; military affairs; and political history, including relations with the indigenous kingdoms. The story Maria de Lorena tells is one of early Portuguese heroism in the age of exploration followed by virtually continuous rebellion, economic woe, and imperial setbacks. And yet, in the 89th point, the author concludes "that the following propositions can be advanced":

The Timorese are the best vassals and the best Christians. They are the best vassals because they recognise [the King of Portugal as] their rightful Sovereign, yet are governed by [indigenous] rulers who demean them by any means and at any opportunity and lack the strength to maintain their obedience. They are the best Christians because they still recognise evangelical truths even without pastors leading them.

The first point was only partially true, the second wishful thinking. Despite an early flurry of activity by the Dominicans—much celebrated in later imperial hagiography—three centuries of missionary activity had produced very few converts to the Roman Catholic faith.

Eight decades after Maria de Lorena reached these conclusions, Governor Bento da França compiled estimates of the total population and number of Christians in each of the 54 kingdoms, 15 jurisdictions, and two Portuguese towns (*praça*). His totals: a mere 23,000 Christians out of a total population of 301,000 people.¹ If by the end of the 19th century Christians accounted for an estimated 7 per cent of the population, then they could have been no more than 3 or 4 per cent of the population at the time Maria de Lorena composed his document. Yet, there is not a single word about indigenous religious beliefs or practices in the Sarzedas document.

As efforts emerged in the mid 19th century to establish a functioning colonial regime, Portuguese officials gradually took an interest in unseen sources of power and potency—the indigenous belief systems and ritual practices of the overwhelmingly non-Christian majority of the population. In contrast to the missionaries, who had long adopted a binary view of Christians and pagan souls in need of salvation, colonial administrators sought to make sense of Timorese conceptions of *lulik*, which they took to mean “sacred” or “taboo”, and the rites and sites through which it was expressed, for which they adopted the Malay term *pomali*.² Increasingly, ethnography became the primary means of making sense of *lulik*, *pomali*, and what came to be understood through the term animism.

In this book, Chris Shepherd masterfully traces the ethnographic encounter with animism in Portuguese Timor from the mid 19th century until 1975, when the Portuguese empire was abandoned with fatal consequences for its most distant colony. The book operates at two levels. At its heart lie ten chapter-length studies of authors who address Timorese conceptions of and relations to what, for the sake of caution and respect, we might call the spiritual realm. These are divided into two sets. The first six chapters cover authors who wrote between the 1860s and 1945, from Portuguese officials and clergy to an English/Scottish naturalist. In the second half of the book the author turns to professionally-trained anthropologists. Shepherd demonstrates how “different understandings and forms of animism emerged historically” across this divide, with the most basic distinction being between the “old animism” of a colonial state that was suspicious and desirous of exercising control and the “new animism” of the sympathetic professional ethnographer. But there are also contrasts within the two halves of the book, beautifully signalled by the charming chapter titles.

At a second, higher level, Shepherd documents how, in the eyes of Timorese, European power, wealth and status took on a quasi-spiritual potency replete with risks as well as opportunities. This theme emerges gradually, but will come into full view for the patient reader in the last half of the book and eloquent conclusion. This is an important reminder that, as with all belief systems, animism was never static. As such, the book provides another way of writing the last century of colonial rule. But two warnings are in order. This book is a history of ethnographic accounts, based on an excellent selection of texts and insightful analysis, but it is not a history of Timorese animism *per se*. By extension, readers are cautioned not to assume that the details of the ethnographic texts analysed by Shepherd necessarily do justice to Timorese realities.

In closing, it is perhaps useful to recall that European officials and residents throughout the colonial world worried endlessly about unseen forces. This was certainly the case in the Spanish Philippines, where the friars were deeply superstitious, and in the Netherlands Indies, where in the 1920s and 1930s Dutch authors highlighted colonial anxieties that the natives were secretly engaging in black magic (*guna-guna*) to undermine colonial rule. So too in Portuguese Timor, as we will see.

Douglas Kammen

Preface

Dictionaries define animism as the belief that an immaterial force animates the universe, that spirits inhabit natural objects or that everything has a soul. Definitions of animism frequently include “ancestor worship” whereby people give their dead kin food and animals so that the dead reciprocate with favours; definitions also invoke the idea of anthropomorphism to describe the way humans project human qualities onto animals, landscapes or plants. The animist-faithful are predominantly indigenous people, forest dwellers, hunters and gatherers or peasant-farmers, all inhabitants of the “animistic archipelago”, namely the disparate, widely distributed animistic pockets of the Americas, Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia, and places in between. Historically, animists never identified themselves as such. Animism is a Western conceptual category that emerged out of the contact zones in which Europeans encountered indigenous others through travel, exploration, investment and colonisation. From the perspective of Western science and religion, Europeans invented in animism the evolutionary inferiority of “primitive” people. Colonial ethnography and anthropology were instrumental to this imperial meaning-making about the animistic collective and their difference to Europeans (Pratt 2008; Pels and Salemink 1999; Salemink 2003). The post-war decline in usage of the conceptual category of animism ran parallel to the decline of colonialism itself as well as of the evolutionist thinking that arranged races, cultures and religions into hierarchies.

Recently, scholars have revived the concept of animism. Freed of its 19th-century evolutionist definition as primitive religion, but retaining the idea of anthropomorphism, animism now refers to non-modern ontologies—glossed as “worldviews”—in which non-human beings possess personhood, subjectivity and agency just as people do. They have revised Cartesian binaries (for example, Nature and Culture; Body and Mind; Animate and Inanimate) that have long informed the Western colonial and ethnological analysis of indigenous

ways of life. They have endeavoured to escape dualistic explanatory frameworks, searching for concepts that are expressive of indigenous ontology: ways of living, experiencing, sensing, interpreting, knowing and relating. The breadth of scholarship that fills edited volumes such as *The Handbook of Contemporary Animism* (Harvey 2015) and *Animism in Southeast Asia* (Århem and Sprenger 2016) attest to the central position of that notion of ontology in this post-Cartesian enterprise; those volumes, in turn, attest to the decisive comparative thrust behind the new scholarship. A multitude of case studies now form the basis of a broad interdisciplinary, comparative discussion on animist ontology in all its diverse manifestations across the animistic archipelago.

If the ethnologists and colonial scholars of the 19th century construed “old animism” asymmetrically against the metric of true science, rational knowledge and stages of cultural, religious and racial evolution, anthropologists today define “new animism” symmetrically in contrast to other ontologies or worldviews, not least of which is “naturalism”, the dominant, Cartesian ontology underpinning Western science. This book applies these old and new theoretical relationships between animism and naturalism to the physical encounter between Timorese animists and Western naturalistic-outsiders. It is not here that it breaks new ground: the human sciences are now replete with historical and ethnographic studies of cross-cultural, colonial, postcolonial encounters of Western explorers, missionaries, scientists, administrators, developers and so on with “local people” or “local cultures”. Where the book does break new ground is by showing how in colonial Portuguese Timor local people leading an animistic way of life and foreigners leading a naturalistic way of life reached out to each other, and as they did so they transformed the expression of animism—in ritual, sacrifice, taboos, totems, myths etcetera. If animist expression continually changed, it only did so because Timorese were motivated through their deep, pervasive and inalienable animistic ontology to embrace the presence of outsiders.

I am particularly concerned with those outsiders who practiced ethnography. Because ethnographers interacted very closely with the people they studied, their ethnographies reveal more than the general historical archive does about outsiders’ experience of this all-embracing animism. Ethnographers not only witnessed animism’s transformations, they became embroiled in them too. They participated in transforming animism in the process of observing it, investigating it, evangelising it,

recoiling from it, bringing their naturalistic interpretations to it and, finally, writing about it.

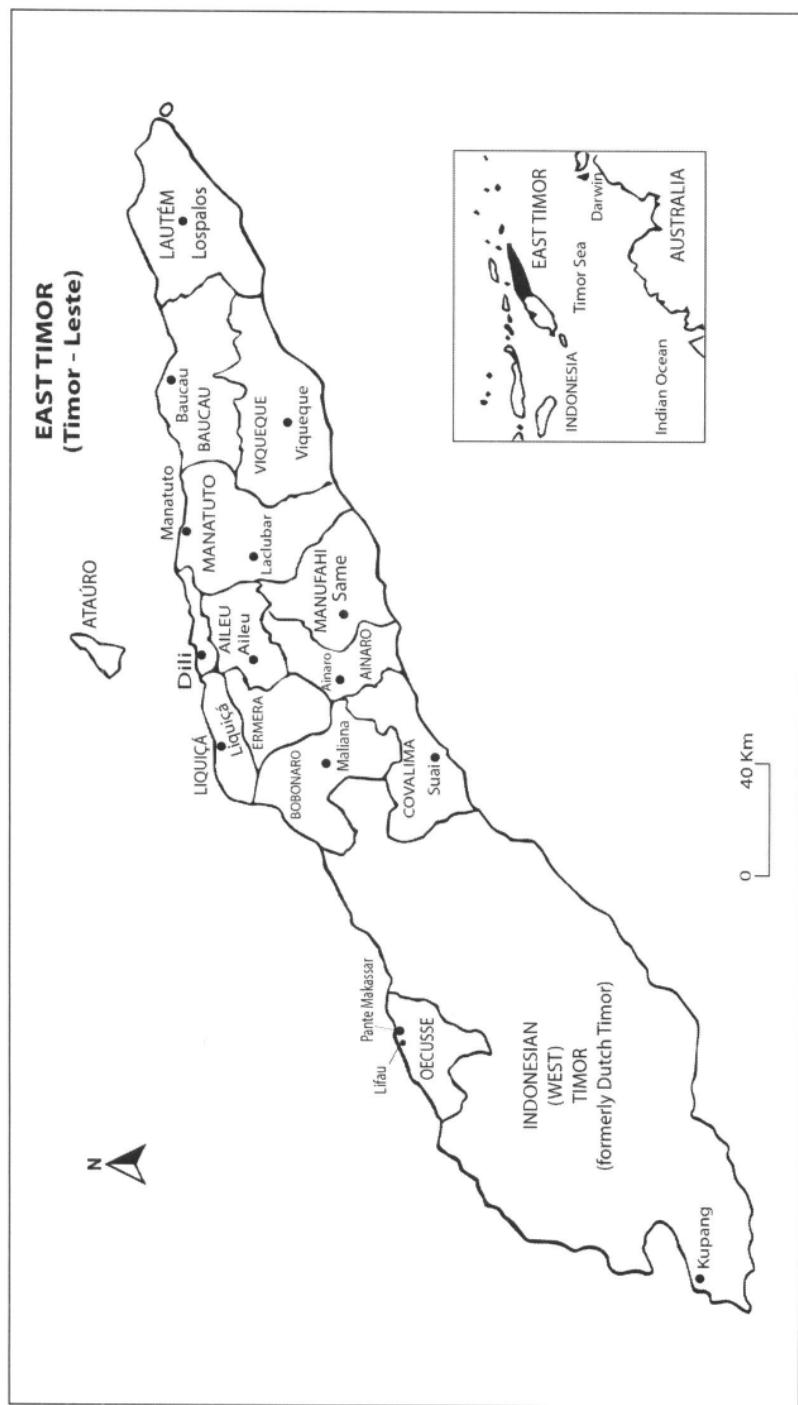
This book draws on the ethnographic record to bring “ontological storytelling” to the anthropology of religion, anthropological theory and the history of colonialism of Timor. Storytelling has been elevated to a social-science method in its own right (Anderson 2008; Davidson 2016; Griffiths 2007). I have sought to bring the subject alive with stories—heartwarming, tragic, comic and politically non-conformist—of crocodiles, geckos and vipers; of witches, ancestors and ghosts; of witchdoctors, collectors and crackpots; of coffee, rice and areca; of dense forests, misty mountains and spirit-infested caverns; of field sites, cameras and notebooks; of poverty, acculturation and development; of adventures, coincidences and mishaps; of confusions, confessions and betrayals; of cruelty, friendship and love; of girls jumping off boats, administrators with their pants off, and anthropologists in dire straits.

Bringing character and feeling to bear on facts and dates, the book presents another way of telling East Timor’s final century of colonial history. The ethnographic sources I have selected traverse critical phases or events in East Timor’s past. Part One takes the reader through the pre-pacification period and the pacification campaigns, the decline of the native aristocracy and kingdoms, the penetration of capitalism, the repression of some animist forms and the protection of others. In Part Two, the reader arrives at the stable post-war years that set the stage for professional field anthropology in the last quarter-century of Portuguese rule. I also consider the end of Portuguese colonialism and the Indonesian invasion and annexation of East Timor (1975).

I chose the ethnographic source texts for their seminal quality, depth and topicality—those that reveal most about animism as an object of ethno-historical investigation for my meta-ethnographic history of outsiders’ more or less reflexive experience of animism. Some readers will notice the near absence of contemporary ethnography of East Timor. This is because a methodological, relativistic, symmetrical meta-ethnographic approach resists taking the latest or “best” ethnography as the metric by which to assess the truth or quality of earlier ethnography; instead, it situates ethnography in its historical context, assuming that ethnography both shapes and is shaped by myriad economic, political and military forces (Salemink 2003: 1). It is also because the present project is part of an extended one that

leads into East Timor's post-independence times. In sum, this volume presents original, almost entirely unpublished research that traces the historical contours of the ethnographic record on an ever-changing animism in an ever-changing East Timor, where ethnographers themselves became mixed up, often unwittingly, in the transformation of animism.

Finally, a note about me. I first visited East Timor in 2002. In 2007, a period of funding took me to Anthropology at the Australian National University, and then on to East Timor for fieldwork on rural development (2009–10). Gradually, my interest turned from development critique to the Portuguese-era history and animism. My background in the sociology of science was of little help in making sense of East Timor's animism—much less its history—through the lens of the anthropological literature. One personal motivation behind writing this book was to better understand animism and anthropology; coincidentally, I hope to have made a fairly light read of these subjects (parts of the introduction notwithstanding) for those of you who are new to them, as I was.



Map 1 The island of Timor and the political map of East Timor (Timor-Leste)

Introduction

One momentous event in the history of East Timor has passed entirely unremarked by historians: the killing of a totemic crocodile-ancestor in Baucau in 1930. One morning, the Portuguese administrator, Armando Pinto Correia, chanced upon a throng of "excited natives" in Seiçal. Pushing through to the centre of the commotion, he found a crocodile bound to a coconut tree with flimsy twine made of leaves. A group of men had evidently rescued the stuck animal from inside an irrigation pipe. The administrator was shocked to see natives standing recklessly close to the poorly tethered beast, whose "jaws snapped hungrily and tail whipped furiously". He urged the people to disband, but found no way to convince them. "Don't worry, your Excellency," explained the village chief respectfully, "we know the creature could break free, but now he is not in the mood for biting because he is feeling embarrassed for being found on land." If the crocodile was not in the mood for biting, the administrator was not in the mood for games. Wanting to claim the crocodile's body as his own, he left them with the instruction to kill "the monster" and deliver it to his office in Baucau. The next day the men of Seiçal carried the crocodile to Baucau, strapped to a stretcher. Much to the administrator's horror, it was still alive, struggling violently against its ties.

Correia—a prominent colonial ethnographer as well as an administrator—suspected that the natives could not bear to "shoulder the responsibility of killing their crocodile-ancestor Avô [Grandfather] Lai Liba", for to do so would be to "make trouble". Taking matters into his own hands, Correia fired two shots into the Grandfather-crocodile's forehead. A few years later, in his monograph *Gentio de Timor* [Pagans of Timor], Correia would explain in a section on "religious beliefs" that the crocodile was *lulik*—translated as "sacred"—and that it was equally *lulik*—translated as "prohibited"

or “taboo”—to kill it. The “cultish adoration” the people of Seical *felt* for the crocodile, Correia added in a footnote, was the best example of totemism that he had encountered; he cited the classic work *Totemism* (1887), in which British anthropologist James George Frazer explained that the totem was a class of objects with which the superstitious savage bore a special, intimate relationship: “the reciprocal relationship between the totem and the savage is such that the totem protects man, and man proves his respect for the totem; if the totem is an animal, he does not kill it, if it is a plant, he does not harvest it” (Correia 1934: 67, 65–7n1).¹

The Administrator of Baucau and the local people had two very different views of the crocodile. Correia saw in the crocodile a biological entity. In accord with the Western naturalistic worldview, it was part of “Nature”, and was readily understood scientifically in ecological, taxonomic or anatomical terms. The crocodile was “self-evidently” non-human. Lacking the intentions, feelings and consciousness of a “person”, it was, strictly speaking, an animal. There was no intimacy or equality between crocodile and man. The natives, for their part, saw a grandfatherly spirit embodied and indeed personified in the revered crocodile. As a closely related being, Avô Lai Liba shared with his human kin understanding, sentiments and a will. The administrator doubted what the locals knew to be true: the crocodile was powerful and able to bestow misfortune on his living relatives. In fact, said Correia (1934: 65), “rare was the year that one or two natives did not fall prey to the crocodile’s jaws”, and so “it was tradition to propitiate Avô Lai Liba yearly with a couple of domestic animals left tied to a post in the tidal shallows”. In sum, the local people’s relationship to Avô Lai Liba was an expression of their animism (of which their totemism was a part). Their knowledge of him, and his of them, was a familiar, intimate one. If the administrator’s naturalism posited clear boundaries between distinct, objective categories of Animate and Inanimate, Human and Non-human, native animism permitted a converging and diverging flow of difference and similarity among a spectrum of beings, whose personalities, intentions and desires acquired their shape through their inter-subjective relationships with people (Bird-David 1999; Ingold 2000).

A cursory interpretation of Correia’s account is likely to position colonialism as an oppressive counter-animistic force, and it might appear rather coincidental to animism per se that for the first time in Timor’s history, a live crocodile was transported on a stretcher,

then shot and probably gutted, stuffed and displayed in Administrator Correia's new museum, to which natives would later show up to leave offerings for their revered yet *seemingly* unceremoniously terminated ancestor.² Yet, another reading of the same event makes animism look rather less passive. Perhaps the people of Seical were not so much negotiating the colonial command to kill their grandfather as they were engaging animistically with the threat posed by "His Excellency" Correia himself as a foreign potency? Seen in these terms, the delivery of the live crocodile may be construed less as a form of submission and more as a ceremonial, even ritual, offering to a foreigner whose power was perceived similarly to the power of the crocodile-ancestor. The administrator and the crocodile, in other words, may have presented a homologous animistic force (by which the term "homologous" implies an underlying structural relationship³). Namely, both of them were personages (one human, the other not quite) requiring appeasement with offerings, albeit with a twist: the crocodile to whom offerings were routinely made in ritual contexts became the live offering to a colonial administrator. The Seical people could thus avert the wrath and secure the favour of the administrator just as they had always done with their Avô Lai Liba. By this interpretation, animism would not be deferring to colonial authority. Instead, it would be extending its (onto)logic from the danger posed by the spirit world to the danger posed by the colonial world. For this, the *lulik* property of the crocodile was passed on to the administrator as quasi-*lulik*, and both crocodile and administrator were handled accordingly.

The Timorese conception of *lulic* (in Portuguese) or *lulik* (in Tetum) may be construed as a "sacred" property possessing certain objects, features of the landscape, plants, animals and even people, which in turn is expressed in various "taboos" (Correia 1934; Hicks 1976). Judith Bovensiepen (2014a: 121–2) takes the concept further. In her "*Lulik*: Taboo, Animism, or Transgressive Sacred?", she follows Josh Trindade (2012) to define *lulik* as a vital force or energy. Comparing *lulik* to the Malay and Polynesian cognates of *semangat* and *mana*, Bovensiepen says that *lulik* can create or destroy life, establish identity, invoke moral authority and impose social obligations. *Lulik*, Bovensiepen argues, needs to be understood in view of the situated emotional, moral and political dynamics, particularly when "the differentiating boundary between human and non-human entities is transgressed". Positing a link between *lulik* and foreigners, Bovensiepen concludes her article with a provocative idea.

It strikes me that the role of foreign powers [in East Timor] is *structurally similar* to that of *lulik* powers, since these foreigners also *represent* an external other that is both dangerous and can be appropriated for one's own advantage. It may well be possible that *lulik* powers appear to be more dangerous precisely in those historical and social circumstances when foreign powers are most threatening. How *lulik* energies have been transformed through people's ongoing and ambiguous relations with colonial others is a topic that surely deserves further exploration (Bovensiepen 2014a: 135) [emphasis added].

This book begins with Bovensiepen's overture. It builds on her suggestion of a structural overlay—or what I call homology—between the animistic-*lulik* response to spirit threats and rewards and the animistic-*lulik* response to colonial ones—threats and rewards surrounding, for example, land, equity, morality, labour, peace, authority, autonomy, status, fertility, sexuality and, in a general sense, animism and life. Through the interplay of threats, rewards and *lulik* power, animism, I propose, underwent a transformation which was, fundamentally, a structural one.

This deep, structural transformation, which I call transformative animism, is the principal focus of the book. Through the ten chapters that follow, I reveal transformative animism as an empirical phenomenon that speaks to the adaptive power of animism to integrate outside influences and respond to new power relationships. Animism thus changed through the colonial encounter. It became defensive or protective, responsive or adaptive, conciliatory or negotiable, opportunistic or individualistic, imitative or antagonistic, performative or dramatic, ironic or ambivalent, self-conscious or romantic, immanent or transcendent, diluted or hyper-animated, pragmatic or political. Amidst these convulsing socio-animistic shifts, the fundamental ontology of animism remained constant while it wrapped itself around the bodies and souls of foreigners to manifest expressions never seen before, such as a live crocodile on a stretcher or a dead one in a museum.

I contend that these changes did not happen on a level playing field. Rather, animists ranked the power, status and wealth of foreigners hierarchically, which equated to categories of hierarchy in the spirit world (Århem 2016: 18–9). Transformative animism was, I propose, hierarchical transformative animism; a totem crocodile was fit for a stately administrator like Correia, but not for a regular Portuguese bureaucrat, petty entrepreneur or army corporal. One

major expression of this hierarchical transformative animism was the way animists mapped their ritualised interaction with powerful spirits onto their ceremonialised interactions with powerful foreigners (see Roque 2010a, 2011, 2012a); the greater the historical level of colonial control, all the more prominent was this mapping of ritual onto ceremony. Thus, the “pacification” of the indigenous population around the turn of the 20th century heralded a critical period in the emergence of transformative animism.

Deferring questions of theory and history for now, I foreshadow here how my approach has taken shape in conversation with the recent literature on “new animism”. Just as anthropologists have used the resuscitated notion of animism to provide common ground for horizontal comparative ethnographies and cultural analyses across far-flung places (Århem and Sprenger 2016), I use the notion to develop a vertically layered history of ethnography in the one place. I explore how different understandings and forms of animism emerged historically, ethnographically and experientially in East Timor as a Portuguese colony. To do so, I examine a sequence of ten ethnographers, ten distinct ethnographic encounters and ten modes of representing animism in writing. Each chapter corresponds to one protagonist-ethnographer. The six ethnographies of Part One, Colonial Ethnography, cover seminal works from 1860 to 1945. The four ethnographies of Part Two, Professional Ethnography, cover seminal works from 1960 to 1975.

The term “ethnography”, here, means more than a source of data. For while colonial and professional ethnography bore witness to these processes of animistic transformation, the ethnographers themselves also embodied the same processes. Colonial ethnography transformed animism in tandem with the “will to govern” (Pels and Salemink 1999; Thomas 1994), while professional ethnography transformed it in tandem with the will to govern field sites, informants and information (Clifford 1983). Far from assuming that the two ethnographic styles are antithetical—one geared towards colonial power and the other towards impartial social science—I treat them as complementary. Indeed, some of the “reflexive” ethnography of professional anthropology of Portuguese Timor highlights the interpersonal and interpretive complexities that colonial ethnographers frequently overlooked in their routine dismissal of indigenous superstition; similarly, colonial ethnography highlights the political context in which European and American anthropologists plied their purportedly apolitical trade. If one aim of this book is to unsettle

the boundary between spirit potencies and colonial ones, another is to unsettle that between colonial ethnography and professional ethnography (Pels and Saleminck 1999).

A General Note About Timor's History

The spectacular island of Timor covers around 30,000 square kilometres. Belonging to the Malay Archipelago, it is the easternmost of the Lesser Sunda Islands. Timor is mountainous—its highest peak of 3,000 metres—with many rivers that run dry after the wet season. Coastal plains regularly merge into mangrove swamps, if not into stunning beaches, rocky tidal shallows and beautiful coral reefs. When Portuguese first visited the island for its sandalwood in the early 1500s, they found linguistically diverse and colourful tribal groups, consisting predominantly of people of Austronesian and Melanesian origin. These small-scale groups eked out a living by farming, hunting, gathering and fishing. They also carried on some trade with each other, and were positioned on the periphery of broader trade networks that spanned the Malay Archipelago and reached as far north as China.

The Portuguese undertook trading expeditions to Timor (from Solor) in the 1500s, and they began to settle in the western half of the island's north coast in the 1600s. The Dutch also came in the 1600s. For a long time, the Portuguese and the Dutch vied for territorial control in alliance or conflict with indigenous groups and the "black" descendants of Portuguese, the "Topasses". The Portuguese were eventually pushed eastwards from Lifau in 1769, after which they established the stronghold of Dili against the backdrop of a fairly autonomous and volatile indigenous population. By the 1860s, the Portuguese and the Dutch had made great progress in their negotiations of sovereignty over their respective island halves, with the Portuguese retaining the western north-coast enclave of Oecusse. For all the talk of sovereignty, however, the 18th and 19th centuries saw the Portuguese and the Dutch execute, at best, indirect rule based on unstable vassalage and tribute arrangements with the patchwork of indigenous kingdoms. Indigenous rebellions and internecine conflict were common. Only through the pacification campaigns around the turn of the 20th century were the colonial powers able to take direct rule of the kingdoms; only at that point can we speak properly of Portuguese Timor and Dutch Timor as colonies; after that, the

indigenous world of Timor dramatically changed (Hägerdal 2012; Kammen 2015, 2017); so too did animism.

The Japanese occupied Timor Island from 1942 to 1945 during World War II. After the war, Dutch Timor was integrated into Indonesia to become West Timor of the Nusa Tenggara province, while the Portuguese resumed control of their eastern “possession”. In the 1970s, various converging political pressures brought Portugal to decolonise. No sooner had the Portuguese completed their withdrawal from Timor in 1975 than the Indonesian army invaded from West Timor. East Timor then became the 27th province of Indonesia, but at great cost to the East Timorese people, of whom as many as 200,000 perished—about one third of the population. After 24 years of struggle for independence, the East Timorese prevailed. Timor-Leste, as it is now called, has been an independent nation state since 2002 (Gunn 1999).

Colonial Ethnography

We can well regard Portuguese Timor as a microcosm of the manner in which colonial ethnography emerged all over the colonised world. Ever since the 16th century when Portuguese first began to travel to Timor Island, voyagers, missionaries, explorers, naturalists, traders, settlers, officers and governors would adventitiously chronicle the ways of the native inhabitants. After the Portuguese had established Dili (1769) and negotiated with the Dutch to retain the eastern half of the island (1859), the first of several early, part-ethnographic monographs appeared: Afonso de Castro’s *As Possessões Portuguezas na Oceania* (1867) [Portuguese Possessions in Oceania (1867)]. Like Castro, some ethnographers such as British naturalist Alfred Wallace (2010 [1869]) and Governor Bento da França (1891, 1897) barely penetrated the interior for fear of “black mountain tribes” (Roque 2010b, 2012b). In 1883, however, Scottish naturalist Henry Forbes ventured as far as the island’s southern foothills to observe the physiognomy and customs of the “savages”; he recounts his first-hand experience in his *A Naturalist’s Wanderings in the Eastern Archipelago* (1885).

The colonial ethnography of Portuguese Timor found its stride after the turn of the 20th century as the indigenous kingdoms were “pacified”. Encouraged by the rising international status of ethnography and the periodic appeals of governors to district officials

to report on indigenous practices, commanders, administrators, planters, missionaries, geographers and anthropologists set about recording the customs, languages, livelihoods, technology, politics and racial admixture of the many indigenous groups (Castro 2004 [1910]: 87; Correia 1934: 307). Amidst assessments of climate, geography and natural history, they urged the exploitation of the colony, the extraction of mineral wealth, the development of roads and plantations, the optimisation of indigenous labour, the improvement of the native condition, the conversion of “native pagans” to Christianity, the introduction of a migrant workforce and European settlement. The literature evinced an underlying biological determinism, whereby the size and form of indigenous craniums signalled a racial inferiority which, in turn, accounted for the native people’s recalcitrant superstitions, absurd rituals, limited intelligence, depraved morality and indolent behaviour. Amidst all of this, a number of ethnographies stand out for their inclusion of personal experience: Alberto Osório de Castro (1910), Armando Pinto Correia (1934, 1944), José Martinho (1943, 1945), and Catholic priests Abílio José Fernandes (2016 [1931]) and Ezequiel Pascoal (1936a, 1936b, 1937).⁴

Portuguese colonial ethnography drew on knowledge of indigenous practices and race from elsewhere in Europe, particularly England, France and Holland. Edward B. Tylor’s (1871) socio-evolutionary “animism” as “primitive religion” prior to polytheism, monotheism and, ideally, non-theistic science provided theoretical clarification for the long-standing Portuguese concept of *fetishismo*—fetishism—to describe the “intrinsic power” West African natives “arbitrarily” attributed to their “idols” (Pietz 1985). Rather mirroring the national folkloricist Portuguese ethno-literary tradition (Leal 2001), the colonial ethnography of Timor favoured the piecemeal description of native traditions, habits, customs or rituals (Pt.: *tradições, usos, costumes, estilos*). To this end, Portuguese colonial ethnography accommodated the more utilitarian, post-Tylorean explanatory frameworks of other European ethnologists, such as James G. Frazer and Arnold van Gennep, but did not take up the view of indigenous societies as integrated “wholes” that sprung from French sociology. Nor did Portugal’s colonial ethnography respond to ideas that challenged the hierarchical model of racial evolutionary classification, such as those of the North American critique of “primitive mentality” and the metric of cranium size (Stocking 1992: 352–3). Clearly, the Portuguese priority was not to keep pace with foreign science but to enunciate authoritatively on the supposed primitive condition of

the natives in relation to the advanced European or, in the case of Catholic ethnography, the true Christian. This, of course, justified the civilising mission, which, in turn, helped to revive Portuguese imperial pride at the margins of colonial Europe (Leal 2001; Roque 2010a).

With greater or lesser response to European ethnological trends, old-style in situ colonial ethnography of administrators, army officers and clergy continued in the post-war period (Menezes 1968; see Hicks 2011). Yet, it was eclipsed by a new, more prestigious, state-sponsored, metropolitan Portuguese professional ethnography. The Anthropological Mission to Timor (1953–4, 1957, 1963), led by António de Almeida, aimed to draw “the Portuguese Timor ethnolinguistic map” based on the collection of ethnographic, archaeological, linguistic and physical-anthropological data across the territory (Almeida 1994). The field methods were predominantly quantitative and extensive; the analysis descriptive and comparative (Castelo 2017: 4–5; Hicks 2011: 35). While Almeida adopted the idea of “culture” and compared its expressions across the indicated “31 ethnolinguistic groups”, he bypassed the “cultural relativism” that by this time held sway in most other European and North American academies. His research on racial hierarchies and his dismissal of indigenous “false belief” over “true science” similarly depicted Portuguese colonialism as a scientific enterprise with grand civilising effects (Schouten 2001a).

In contrast, a contemporary of Almeida, Ruy Cinatti, pursued a more meaningful expression of cultural relativism in his study of Timorese ritual, myth, song, textile design and architecture (Cinatti 1965, 1987, 1996b; Cinatti et al. 1987). Cinatti’s message was to value the cultures and aesthetics of Timor and to apply anthropological knowledge for the benefit of the Timorese, whom he called his “friends” (Castelo 2017: 7; Cinatti 1948, 1996b: 27, 29; Cinatti and Oliveira 1973: 21–31). Cinatti, however, revealed no more about his “encounter” experiences than Almeida did. Outside Portugal, Cinatti is remembered for his international role in advancing non-Portuguese professional ethnography in Portuguese Timor.

Professional Ethnography

In the post-war period, the Portuguese government permitted a score of foreign anthropologists to access Portuguese Timor for fieldwork. The first to arrive in 1960 was the British-Australian, semi-professional ethnologist, Margaret King. British graduate student David Hicks entered Timor in 1966. Then came a group of five France-based

scholars under the auspices of the "French-Portuguese Ethnological Mission" (1966/9–70): Louis Berthe, Claudine Friedberg, Henri Campagnolo, Maria Olímpia Lameiras-Campagnolo and Brigitte Clamagirand began their first phase of fieldwork in 1966 (Castelo 2017: 2). American anthropologists Elizabeth Traube and Shepard Forman appeared in 1972 and 1973 respectively, both leaving in 1974 amidst the growing unrest accompanying Portuguese decolonisation. A third American, Toby Fred Lazarowitz (1980), arrived in 1974 and departed immediately prior to the Indonesian invasion of December 1975.

These field anthropologists took an approach that appeared to have little in common with the colonial ethnological tradition. The Portuguese ethnographic and historical literature hardly drew their attention. Instead, they adhered to the tenets evolving within the national academies of their respective countries. By this stage, however, the lines separating British social anthropology, American cultural anthropology and European ethnology had become increasingly blurred for the discipline had internationalised over the course of half a century. French functionalist sociology (notably of Émile Durkheim) had been absorbed into British social anthropology following the decline of the evolutionist assumption integral to the "animism" inaugurated by Edward Tylor (1871). The vibrant fieldwork tradition, emblematic of British anthropology, was taken up in North America, as was the British fascination for the "exotic" topics of tribal religion (animism), kinship and ritual. The functionalism of British anthropology also migrated to American ethnology—later rebranded as cultural anthropology—amidst a deepening concern for vanishing cultures. American cultural relativism crept into British and continental anthropology, while French structuralism became doctrinaire in most academies of Europe and the United States. Eventually, the various ethnological traditions of Europe aligned with the American post-war cultural anthropology, which had been trending away from the diachronic "study of man" towards the synchronic "study of culture" (Stocking 1992: 352–8). Amidst the delineation of "area studies", ever-greater numbers of anthropology students sought out new cultural groups within broader, culturally related areas (including Austronesia and Eastern Indonesia) (Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

All the while, the central role of ethnographic fieldwork was elevated. As George Stocking (1992: 357) put it, fieldwork was now "the certifying criterion of membership in the anthropological

community" whose "methodological value" inhered in "participant observation in small-scale communities" conceived of in "holistic, relativist and largely synchronic" terms. Anthropologists sought "whole cultures" in the crevices between the plains of colonised, acculturated or modernising peoples, often lamenting the ubiquitous forces of modernisation (Hicks 1976; King 1963a).

With criticism of cultural essentialism some decades away, anthropologists landing in Portuguese Timor in the 1960s and 1970s set their sights on specific ethnolinguistic groups as exemplars of a culture—the Fataluku, the Tetum, the Bunak, the Makassae, the Mambai or the Kemak—of which a given village or ritual centre was considered representative. These scholars typically homed in on the strangest aspects of social life, predominantly animism and the interrelated subjects of kinship, ritual, taboo, myth, and so on. Ethnographers cultivated their professional identities from their chosen ethnolinguistic setting, the repertoire of established theoretical orientations—functionalism, structuralism and a residue of diffusionism—and the newer, proliferating, specialised "adjectival anthropologies"—the symbolic, interpretive, ecological, economic, cognitive anthropologies (Stocking 1992: 359–60). Ethnographers of Portuguese Timor navigated in idiosyncratic ways the historical sediments and contemporary spread of theories, methods and disciplinary niches.

The timing of this distinctly "foreign" ethnography in Portuguese Timor proved to be crucial in another respect, for colonial wars, decolonisation and the collapse of empires forced the globalised discipline as a whole into a period of crisis (Clifford 1983; Robinson 2004). In most cases, anthropologists could no longer operate under the umbrella of colonialism, and the European expansion through which their profession had emerged was thrown into relief (Pels and Salemink 1999: 5–6). Access to field sites now required negotiating with independent nation states planning for economic development. In their midst were "Third World intellectuals" whose sense of postcolonial justice led them to recoil at "light-skinned Europeans" studying "brown-skinned others" (Stocking 1992: 358–9). Anthropology became uncomfortably self-conscious of the global disparities, colonial interests and racism in which it had been embedded; of the professional exploitation inherent in the objectification of "others"; and of the career and personal interests that lay behind data collection. Even the cultural relativism that had seemed to defend vulnerable cultural groups was now charged with exalting the very differences

that marked their subordination (Lewis 1973: 581–4). Critics called for a reinvention of the discipline, the abandonment of the scientific approach, a political engagement with oppressed groups and even the inclusion of informants as co-authors. They also urged an honest “reflexivity” to address the place of the ethnographer in broader political spheres, the means of knowledge acquisition and the politics of relationships in the field (Stocking 1992: 358–9). Reflexive ethnography even became a genre in its own right (Rabinow 1977); not coincidentally, ethics committees were institutionalised to regulate field practice, restore anthropology’s disciplinary integrity and announce the emancipation from old school anthropology (Pels and Salemink 1999: 3).

If reflexivity is understood as the appearance of a political, normative, narrative and emotional “I, the ethnographer” mediating between field experience and its textualisation, four of the ten aforementioned foreign ethnographers of Portuguese Timor—King, Hicks, Forman and Traube—revealed themselves as ethnographic actors. In whatever form reflexivity came—cautiously frank, demonstrably ethical, circumspect, analytical, heroic, adventurous, poetic, literary, sentimental, entertaining—it meant that anthropologists could tell new stories about an animism whose historical transformations they often recognised through the research they carried out.

From Our Animism to Their Naturalism

The well-established demarcation between colonial ethnography and professional, “non-colonial” ethnography becomes blurred when we consider that all outsider-Westerners in Portuguese Timor shared a single ontology, namely naturalism.⁵ Naturalism refers to the increasingly dualistic and peculiarly Western mode of dividing up the world into distinct binary categories, commonly known as “Cartesian dualities”: Mind (spirit, soul, consciousness) and Body; Human and Non-human; Animate and Inanimate; Culture and Nature. The roots of this thinking lay in the biblical tradition, Greek philosophy and medieval theology. Philosophers of the 18th-century Enlightenment Age then entrenched Cartesian dualities in Western thought. Naturalists—that is, scholars of natural history and natural philosophy—yearning for “true knowledge” and epistemological authority, went on to develop a scientific method whose hallmarks were empiricism, experimentation, physical causality and evidence-based reasoning. They held that scientific knowledge of Nature

was objective and true if it was separated from culture, society and politics (Latour 1993, 2010). They promulgated an idea of Nature as a singular and universal entity. In the 18th and 19th centuries, these scholars categorised evermore physical entities in the world and postulated on the “natural laws” that occasioned observable phenomena (Latour 2010; Verran 2002). They established the groundwork for the 20th-century natural sciences: the life sciences—including biology, geography and geology—and the earth sciences—chemistry and physics. In the process, the clergy found its authority undermined, as the naturalists-cum-scientists, joined by technocrats, repositioned religion as “theistic belief” due to its transcendent explanatory regimes; the Christian God was (at best) left to fill the gaps in knowledge that scientists could not yet explain (Henry 2010: 42–3).

The human (or social) sciences developed in parallel. Emulating the epistemological axioms of science, 19th-century moral philosophers had their science reformulated as the 20th-century human sciences encompassing politics, philology, sociology and psychology. Anthropologists and ethnologists in particular gave ethnography a dual orientation as knowledge and practice that straddled the natural and the human sciences. As such, they made visible the physiological and social traits of people who were deemed racially, cognitively, morally and technologically inferior to Europeans. In the wake of Tylor (1871), they institutionalised and popularised the idea of animism as primitive religion within this conglomerate of naturalistic-scientific, colonial and anthropological discourses (Stocking 1992: 349–51). In Portuguese Timor as elsewhere, intellectuals and colonials honed the meaning of animism through the confluence of naturalism and the colonial encounter with human and racial diversity.

By the mid 20th century, communities of Western anthropologists had practically discarded the naturalistic, evolutionist partner-concepts of animism and race. At the same time, an implicitly post-Cartesian notion of animism surfaced, especially in the work of Irving Hallowell, which marked the beginning of the ontological turn in anthropology (Århem 2016: 7). In his study of the North American Ojibwa people, Hallowell called for a re-evaluation of the term “person” as well as the distinction between the terms animate and the inanimate. The Ojibwa’s “thoroughly personalised cosmos”, he stated, was devoid of impersonal or natural forces such that there was no inanimate and no supernatural as ontological realms distinct from social or natural (Hallowell 1960: 43–5; Morrison 2015: 44–5).

Philippe Descola (1992) was the first to explicitly revive the term animism to describe a cosmological type common to Native American societies (Århem 2016: 7). Descola (2015 [2006]: 78–85) subsequently advanced four logical ontological types in which subjects relate to each other: animism, totemism, analogism and naturalism. Positing similarity and difference on a dual axis of interiority (consciousness and mind, souls and spirits) and physicality (the body and bodily action), each type revealed different combinations, of which two mirror opposites are central to this book. Descola's idea of animism asserted the ontology that people, animals and things shared a single mode of interior consciousness, but that physical body and action manifested in diverse forms; conversely, naturalism presented a universal singular physical Nature as an objective reality, while interior consciousness varied according to cultural perceptions. We saw exactly this distinction expressed in the introductory story of the crocodile: the animist notion of the crocodile was the mirror opposite of the naturalistic one; the crocodile of animism *felt* and *thought* like a person; the crocodile of naturalism was an animal with *instincts*, like any other natural animal (universalism), but most unlike a person; from the naturalistic perspective, it was rather the Timorese who *thought* differently (cultural perceptions).

Descola's "thought experiment" is important, because from it Marshall Sahlins (2014), who surveyed a variety of animisms, showed that hierarchy was an important variable. His "hierarchy" in his notion of "hierarchical animism" corresponded to hierarchy in social and political formations. Kaj Århem (2016) took up Sahlins's hierarchical animism to propose a continuum of animisms pertinent to Southeast Asia. At one end of the spectrum, he identified a fairly uncommon egalitarian type featuring non-hierarchical relationships between people of hunter-gatherer communities and wild animals; at the other end, he identified a form of hierarchical animism in which hierarchy mirrored the accentuated social stratification of proto-states. Between the two extremes he placed a predominant, generic animistic form typical of sedentary, rice-cultivating and livestock-raising village societies. Århem's notion of "hierarchical animism" suggested that "beings" were linked in asymmetrical, hierarchical "fields of intersubjectivity" manifesting "different degrees of spirit potency" in "different bodies" (Århem 2016: 16, 18–9, 24). In light of this spirit potency differentiation, key characteristics included a "consuming concern" with ancestors, a continuity between the living and the dead, and an abiding preoccupation with the afterworld. Unlike

hunter-gatherer animism, furthermore, this mid-level Southeast Asian prototype peculiar to swidden cultivators and livestock keepers typically took domestic animals as sacrificial gifts to spirits following “an asymmetric relational matrix of dominance and submission” in which physical wealth and status were said to equate to degrees of spiritual power (Århem 2016: 25–6).

Århem’s mid-range hierarchical model corresponds fairly well to Timorese animism. Of particular interest to my structural argument is his proposed correlation between physical wealth and power, on the one hand, and spirit potency on the other. Historically, hierarchy manifested markedly in the stratified structure of indigenous Timor (royal rulers, commoners and slaves) and continues to influence Timorese society today (Hägerdal 2012; Kammen 2015). It also manifests in the differentiated house system (typical of Austronesian house societies) as well as the division between the house-based political authority and spiritual authority (Bovensiepen 2014b). The same division is similarly reflected in the opposition between the political authority of European colonials and the spiritual authority of Timorese which, under conditions of intertribal distrust and insecurity, could result in the acceptance of outsiders as authorities (that is, “stranger-kings”) to moderate local rivalries (Hägerdal 2012: 6; Henley 2002: 10–1; Kammen 2015: 34–5; see also Fox 2008; Lewis 2010).

The inherent connection between wealth/status/power and spirit *and* political potency lends support to the structuralist argument of this book: the wealth/status/power of Europeans established their quasi-spiritual potency. The tangible conditions for bringing colonial others and spirits into a single animistic ontological framework were, I argue, the homologous risks and opportunities perceived in both parties. Risk and opportunity (expressed in various idioms) have long been deployed to explain the existence of animist ritual and continue to appear in the “new animism” literature. In the anthropology of Timor, the best representatives of this viewpoint have been David Hicks (1976, 2004) and Henk Schulte Nordholt (1971). Assuming that power over life’s forces ultimately resides in the spirit world, the point of ritual sacrifice and so on is to avoid the undesired—sickness, moral degeneration, social chaos, unexpected anomalies, natural disasters, insecurity, powerlessness, infertility, scarcity, death—and create more of that which is desired—health, conformism, harmony, order, security, control, fertility, abundance, life. If, following Descola (2015), animism’s foundational ontology consists

of universal subjectivity and the ascription of agency to non-human spirit persons (a restatement of anthropomorphism), its *raison d'être* is to avert risk and hazards on the one hand, and to create or maximise opportunities and rewards on the other; "totems", moreover, have a specific place in this ontology of risk and opportunity, since they figure among the most powerful spirits and therefore call for the most powerful taboos (see Hicks 2004: 52).⁶ However much colonial others have been identified with the political authority pole of diarchic rule, they, like spirits and totems, also brought with them a repertory of risks and rewards. Particularly following the "pacification of the tribes", they came to command a comparable type of control over indigenous people, land and resources that spirit forces had always commanded. Outsiders became absorbed into the same relational logic as spirits in what was essentially also an "asymmetric ... matrix of dominance and submission" (Århem 2016: 25). Familiar relationships with spirits intended to optimise material or immaterial goods (economic, political, moral) spilled over to cover the European presence through an extension of the instrumental ontology of animism, thus occasioning a plethora of novel animistic expressions and practices into which Europeans were imbibed—transformative animism. Accordingly, animists projected their ritualised approach to spirits onto colonial others through inventing a ceremonial homology.

Approach and Method

This book embarks on a meta-ethnographic search for transformative animism. I seek out traces especially in personalised accounts in the ethnographic record, but also in what ethnography tells us about broader colonial processes. Ethnography may often be read at face value. But it is also necessary to read between the lines or against the grain. Among other things, the approach entails peering through the lens of naturalism's "one nature, many cultures" to the animistic ontology of "universal subjectivity" and "many bodies", rendered asymmetrical through differentials in wealth, power and status. I thus explore links between spirit potencies and outsider potencies in the course of colonial and ethnographic encounters with Timorese. I redeploy Kenneth Morrison's (2015: 38–9) concept of categorical slippage to index ambiguous membership of beings to reified categories. If scientific naturalism creates epistemic authority through resisting slippage or ambivalent membership in its routine disavowal of subjectivity and non-human personhood, the relational epistemology

of animism takes knowledge and authority as emergent within inter-subjective relationships with and between humans and non-humans (Bird-David 1999). Animistic authority is therefore not only open to categorical slippage, it also depends on it, since it is ultimately not *whats* (natural causes) that are held responsible for adversity or fortuity, but *whos* (human or non-human intention).

However much they insisted on their naturalistic *whats*, Europeans entered upon this animistic panorama defined by *whos*. In some ethnography presented in this book the evidence suggests that animists assigned to Europeans the *who* identity as the cause of a given adversity; or outsiders appeared as "anomalies" and so were subject to intense speculation on the nature of their being; sometimes Europeans were perceived as malevolent spiritual potencies, as channels for other spirit potencies, or they were subjected to a visit by a spirit for a specific purpose; conversely, they were liable to become enshrouded in positive sacred-like properties or even be recognised as *lulik*; and they could be recruited to get a handle on disruptive spirit forces that Timor's own animist priests had not managed to do. Some Europeans were of course ethnographers, and as such they documented their incorporation into the animist logic.

To explore these ideas through the ethnography of Portuguese Timor requires a methodology that is impartial to ethnographic truth and is therefore epistemologically and normatively relativistic vis-à-vis the ethnographic works treated; seen as such, ethnography can be neither right or wrong nor good or bad. Accordingly, I generally avoid pitting colonial ethnography against professional ethnography, or old professional ethnography against that of the contemporary, postcolonial period (see Pels and Salemink 1999: 1–5). Like Salemink (2003) in his historical study of the ethnography of Vietnam's central highlanders, I forego offering any authoritative version of animism, concentrating instead on the historical, political and colonial circumstances in which the ethnography of Portuguese Timor arose and thus contextualised the experience of ethnographers.

Yet, the ethnography of Timor clearly transcends actual experience. My second approach to reading against the grain therefore considers the representational regimes of colonial and anthropological science. To this effect, my starting point is the textual turn in anthropology, closely associated with the landmark publication, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. There, in repositioning culture as text, James Clifford and George Marcus (1986) argued that the entrenched ideology of anthropology as a science

claiming a positivistic transparency and immediacy of experience was misleading. The volume as a whole assumed that culture was "composed of seriously contested codes and representations"; the poetic and the political were deemed to be inseparable; science was "in, not above, historical and linguistic processes"; academic and literary genres "interpenetrated"; and "the writing of cultural descriptions" was "properly experimental and ethical". The idea of ethnography as "text making and rhetoric", the various contributors suggested, highlighted "the constructed, artificial nature of cultural accounts". The "overly transparent modes of authority" now insinuated "the historical predicament of ethnography" which had always been "caught up in the invention ... of cultures" (Clifford 1986: 2).

If this book takes ethnography to illustrate the "reality" of animistic transformation, it does so in view of the textual turn. Thus, questions arise over the ethnographic authority of my subject-ethnographers and the representational truths they espoused. We know that ethnographers adhered to a particular set of interests that circumscribed, skewed, censored and even fictionalised their field experience; they often longed for pure, unadulterated, non-Europeanised culture and, despite never finding it, devised ways to express it; they were constrained by the need to create or invent knowledge relevant to the discipline, and they distilled information accordingly; they were bound to manufacture the impression of authority—of having been there and seen it—yet, whatever their all-too-human experiences in the field may have been, they could not but present themselves as highly ethical, chaste, sympathetic, competent and dispassionate scientific investigators (Fine 1993); they were attracted to certain political positions, but shied away from others in accord with their personal research plans and professional goals; they concealed their own epistemic superiority behind the veil of cultural relativism; they deployed various textual strategies to hide institutional interests (Fabian 1983). In all of this, reflexivity served as much as a means to pursue illuminating analyses of the self in the field as it served as a reflexive mask, putting honesty and transparency on display while concealing all manner of unpublishable reflections, sentiments, transgressions and egocentricities.

The *Writing Culture* of professional fieldwork can be read backwards to the *writing superstition* of colonial ethnography where the conventions of textualisation were sometimes quite the contrary. (For example, *not* to portray natives as irrational or plain childish would

have been politically suspect.) Here, too, ethnographic representation was fitted with colonial masks that matched ethnographers' professional locations as governors, administrators, military commanders, explorers, magistrates and Catholic priests. I insinuate these textual themes throughout the chapters in order to suggest interpretive possibilities that ethnography, if read literally, forecloses.

Finally, I tell stories. Storytelling as method is not anathema to science. Allow me to cite Tom Griffiths (2007: 5):

Story is sometimes understood as something that is easy and instinctive. But story is actually a piece of disciplined magic, of highly refined science.... It is also a privileged carrier of truth, a way of allowing for multiplicity and complexity at the same time as guaranteeing memorability. Story creates an atmosphere in which truth becomes discernible as a pattern. And so I would argue that narrative is not just a means, it is a method, and a rigorous and demanding one. The conventional scientific method separates causes from one another, it isolates each one and tests them individually in turn. Narrative, by contrast, carries multiple causes along together, it enacts connectivity (cited in Davidson 2016: 15).

In connecting the many stories of ethnographies to my meta-ethnographic stories, this book indeed reveals certain patterns and hierarchies in transformative animism. Each chapter stands alone as an independent story of one ethnographer, telling a sequence of tales—of colonial administration, evangelising, travel, fieldwork—with little analysis. Only in the conclusion do I return to the more familiar language of social science, bringing the pieces together to expound the phenomenon and scope of transformative animism.

Chapter Summary

Part One, Colonial Ethnography, covers the work of four colonial officials, a priest and a visiting naturalist. The opening chapter presents “an ethnography for Empire” as read through the first substantial monograph on Portuguese Timor, Governor Afonso de Castro’s *As Possessões Portuguezas na Oceania* (1867). Castro’s raw, displeasing encounter with Timorese customs during his governorship from 1859 to 1863 was tempered by his imperial desire to tactfully win over the bellicose indigenous population by enticing the native rulers to grow coffee.

On the basis of Part VI of Henry Forbes' *A Naturalist's Wanderings in the Eastern Archipelago* (1885), Chapter Two tells of the Scottish explorer's journey to the south of the island. Disgusted yet intrigued by the savages, the headstrong Forbes tried to sneak around the superstitions that hindered his botanical collection. His transgression exploded in drama when he was pursued up a sacred mountain.

In Chapter Three we meet the colonial magistrate Alberto Osório de Castro, whose "ethnography of aesthetics" appeared in 1910 as *Flores de Coral* [Coral Flowers]. As one of numerous ethnographies published during the final phase of the "pacification" of the indigenous kingdoms, Osório's was unique for his tentative critique of animist "primitivism" and his call for a poetics of Timorese life.

Captain José Simões Martinho, who spent a quarter-century in Timor (1909–35), produced two major works, one of which was the prize-winning *Timor: Quatro séculos de Colonização Portuguesa* (1943) [Timor: Four Centuries of Portuguese Colonisation]. Martinho's recollections of myriad encounters between the colonial state and indigenous groups makes Chapter Four "an ethnography of change" that speaks to the colonial pressures transforming both Timorese society and native animism.

In the final phase of pronounced cultural and political change, the notorious administrator of Baucau district, Armando Pinto Correia, spent six years on the island (1928–34). In Chapter Five, I present his *Gentio de Timor* (1934), which betrays Correia's brutal disregard for the Makassae beliefs, totems and taboos that he was simultaneously engaged in describing in his search for a kind of Timorese ritual purity free of the "contagious influences of Europe".

The final chapter of Part One concerns Father Abílio José Fernandes, a missionary who spent 23 years evangelising in Timor (1914–38). His book, *Esboço histórico e do Estado Actual das Missões de Timor* [Historical Outline and Current State of the Timor Missions], reads as an "ethnography of extremes" by which the opposing forces of good and evil, love and fear, truth and superstition, God and Satan, Christianity and animism, rise in battle; behind this battle is another, namely the battle of the clergy to defend its integrity against an unforgiving, secular state.

Part Two, Professional Ethnography, consists of four chapters on non-Portuguese field anthropologists. British-Australian Margaret King is the protagonist of Chapter Seven. The soulful prose of her popular travelogue *Eden to Paradise* (1963a) offers a poignant account of the sacred (*lulik*) phenomena she experienced during her journeys

around the half-island in 1960 and 1961, during which time she realised that even she was *lulik*.

British anthropologist David Hicks also risked a slide into the spiritual realm when in 1966 and 1967 he endeavoured to make sense of the "theological disorder" among the least "acculturated" natives he could hunt out. Chapter Eight's "ethnography of order" is seen through his two editions of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* (1976, 2004); the tensions between the editions illustrate how one experience can give rise to two vastly different interpretations as the distance of hindsight stretches, as the discipline of anthropology reinvents itself, and as the author himself forgets that he almost, catastrophically, brought a soul of the dead back to life.

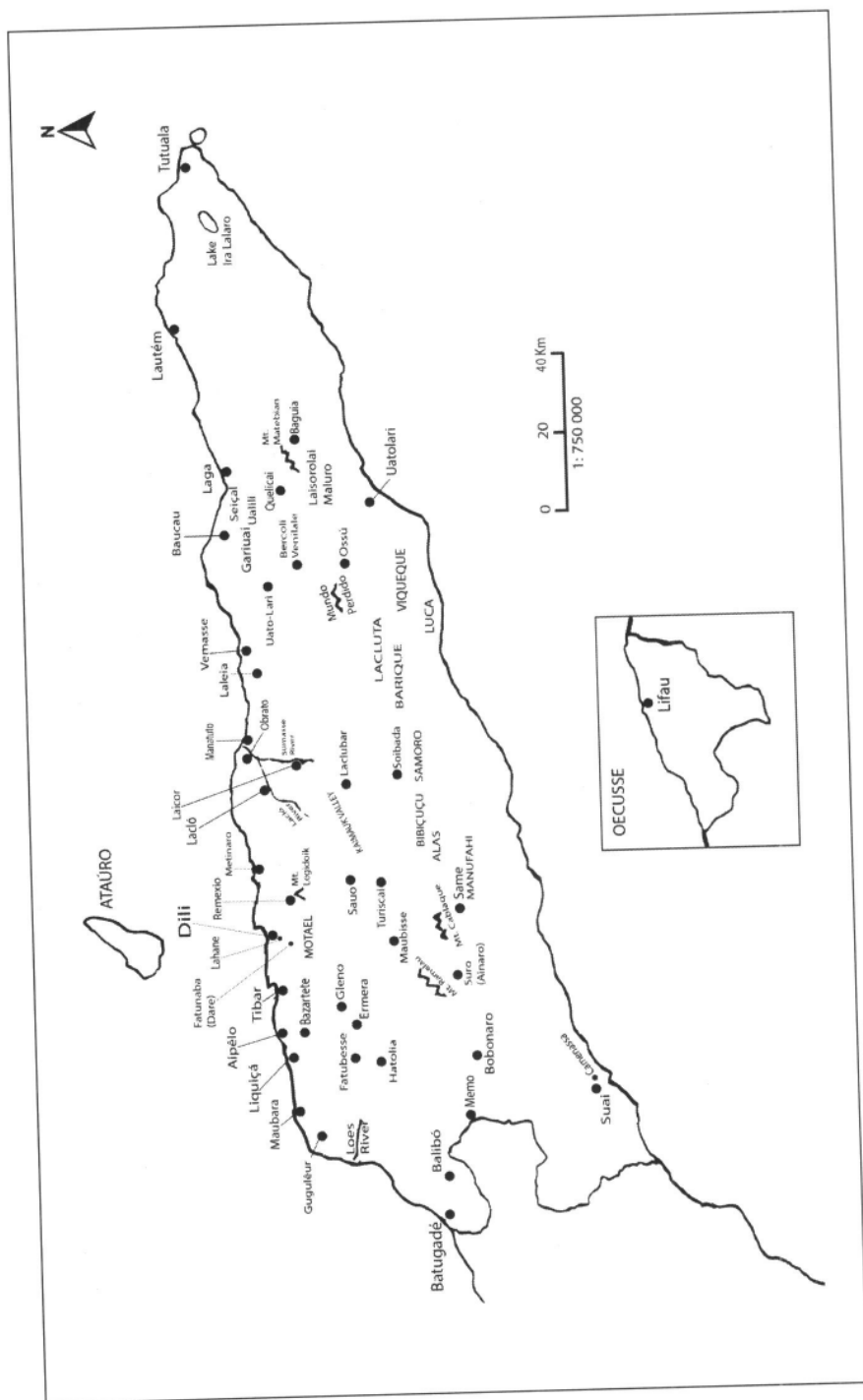
Chapter Nine introduces American anthropologist Shepard Forman through four of his six works (1976, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1981, 2001). Forman came to understand his subject matter through an unseemly coincidence by which he was taken on as the apprentice of a ritual specialist. Forman's extraordinary tale is of a people who shaped, perhaps controlled, his bizarre experience of animism among one of Timor's least acculturated groups, the Makassae of the Matebian range.

In her *Cosmology and Social Life* (1986), American anthropologist Elizabeth Traube offers a poetic reflection of how she went chasing a Mambai creation myth, just as her two infatuated informants went chasing her. A second myth provided the young American femme with "Sahlinsian" insight into how the Mambai people perceived her. The final chapter of Part Two thus unpeels a curious mythical connection to the Timorese side of the ethnographic encounter, bringing into relief the protagonist's identity as an outsider—or insider.

In the conclusion I draw on the ten chapters to offer a framework for understanding the many expressions of the colonial and anthropological engagement with animism. I show how animistic expression changed over the period in question, and how transformative animism can be understood minimally as hyper-, defensive, assisted and political animism based on a homology between spirits and Europeans. I finish with some reflections concerning the contribution of meta-ethnography to the field of new animism and the history of anthropology.

PART I

Colonial Ethnography



Map 2 Portuguese Timor: places identified in the colonial ethnography of Part I

1

The Governor (An ethnography for Empire)

At the time of its publication in 1867, *As Possessões Portuguezas na Oceania* (1867) [The Portuguese Possessions in Oceania] was the most elaborate historical and ethnographic work ever produced on the people of Portuguese Timor. Not coincidentally, it was also the most detailed treatise on the future prospects for colonial governance and economic development. The author, Afonso de Castro (1824–85), was a military man with an intellectual bent.¹ His connection with Timor began in 1854 when he was elected to represent the Timor constituency in the Portuguese parliament. He thus became the leading figure in the negotiations with the Dutch to “simplify the territorial map”, clarifying the border between the Portuguese and the Dutch halves of the island and trading enclaves. This ultimately led to the treaty of 1859, the same year in which Castro made sail for Timor to commence his four-year governorship. Given territorial stability, Castro was confident that he could reshape Timor in order for it to play its part in Portugal’s new, nationalistic longing to revive empire. It was imperative, wrote Castro, that we “reach out ... to the colonies in [abject poverty] and through them retake our place among the foremost colonial powers” (cited in Schouten 2001b: 205–6).

When Castro stepped ashore, the miserable sight of Dili must have hardened his resolve for change. Hemmed in between high mountains and coastal mangroves, the ramshackle town was home to “3,000 souls”—a mix of “Europeans, Indians, Chinese and natives”, said Castro (2010 [1867]: 309). Castro saw “no buildings to speak of”. “Even the houses of Europeans were rough wooden shacks capped by dry palm leaves.” The important structures were but big shacks,

such as the barracks, the secretariat and the governor's residence. Dili was a grim place to see, but an even worse place to live. Miasmas wafted out the rank waters of surrounding swamps, causing continual fatalities among the European population (Castro 2010: 307–9; Felgas 1956: 254–5).

Like his predecessors, Castro faced a predicament. Ever since the collapse of the lucrative sandalwood trade, Timor had become financially dependent on Macau. Foreign businessmen could not be enticed to invest in Timor given its reputation for sickness, impenetrable terrain and rebellious savages. Attempts to set up a Timorese trading company had failed. Trade still relied on foreign vessels that called in—Makassar boats, Dutch schooners and the odd Australian ship. Buffalo, horses, maize, wheat, wax and coffee were less often sold to visiting merchants than they were bartered for basic necessities (Davidson 1994: 8, 80–1, 83–4, 86–7; Felgas 1956: 255). Yet, Castro was determined to devise a system to make the half-island profitable. For this, the governor needed the right product. Gold was only known to exist in “diminutive quantities” far to the south. What initially appeared to be scattered deposits of hard coal turned out to be shale. A mountain of “pure copper” in the kingdom of Vemassee was, upon investigation, “worthless” (Castro 2010: 302–3; Felgas 1956: 423; Wallace 1890: 148–9).

It was not the mineral but the vegetable realm where Castro would find most promise. Coffee was known to grow well in parts of Portuguese Timor (particularly in the former Dutch enclave of Maubara) and it was already traded as a minor crop (Kammen 2015). Castro hoped that coffee could become the principal export. He was inspired by J.W.B. Money's celebration of Dutch colonialism in his two volume work *Java; or, How to Manage a Colony: Showing a Practical Solution of the Questions Now Affecting British India* (Schouten 2001a: 206–7). Money praised the Cultivation System (originally Culture System or *Cultuurstelsel* in Dutch) implemented by the Dutch, and it should not surprise that Castro's single-minded promotion of coffee in Timor coincided with Money's publication of those volumes in 1861. That same year, Castro visited Java, where he was able to witness the burgeoning coffee economy for himself.

What Governor van den Bosch had done for parts of the Dutch East Indies, Castro (2010: 431) believed he would do for Portuguese Timor. The governor recognised, however, that the circumstances in Java were not the same as in Timor. He knew that any cultivation system would need to accommodate the unique conditions of

Timorese “backwardness”. He also knew that in order to reinvent Timor, it was necessary to know in as much detail as possible the kind of island it was, the native political system in place and the people living there. *As Possessões Portuguezas* was oriented to that goal; it was about the knowledge that was needed to govern and bring about change into posterity; and ultimately, it was about Empire.

But how did Castro come to his knowledge? Where did he go? What languages did he speak? The impersonal style of *As Possessões Portuguezas* leaves the reader searching for inferences. One may assume that Castro did not learn much of the local Tetum language for he was impatient with native Timorese who spoke his mother tongue improperly. Portuguese had been “bastardised by chiefs” whose “creole is as hard for us to understand as the Timorese dialects themselves”. Castro only identified three other languages: Baikenó, spoken in the kingdoms of the western reaches of the island (known as Servião), Galoli, spoken in the eastern kingdoms, and Calado (Mambai), spoken “in the kingdoms in the mountains surrounding Dili” (p. 328). He believed, furthermore, that in the centre of the island was an active volcano (p. 301), that the land was devoid of large forests and lakes (p. 306) and that the tallest mountain did not surpass 1,828 metres (p. 300). His limited knowledge of language and terrain would indicate not only that the governor never ventured far south or east, but also that nobody knew much about the places more distant from Dili.² Indeed, 19th-century governors were reluctant to leave the comforting stronghold of Dili. Rebellions against the Portuguese were frequent and the mountainous interior was dangerous (Roque 2012b). Castro confronted major revolts in kingdoms to the east, and Dili itself came under threat at one point, prompting the governor to build a new fort (Oliveira 1950: 15).

For all these reasons, Castro tended to write generically about the land and its people, with few references to specific places and little appreciation of the differences between the various language groups. It would be a mistake, however, to only highlight the shortcomings in Castro’s *As Possessões Portuguezas* in light of later advances in ethnographic and geographical knowledge. A positive interpretation of Castro’s writing demonstrates that it was, in its day, sophisticated and incisive. By reading Castro positively we can better appreciate the enormous influence Castro would exert over Portuguese colonialism for the next 100 years in respect to economic intervention, knowledge of Timorese political history and, not least, the ethnography of indigenous animism.

Indigenous Politics

The Portuguese understood Timor's indigenous politics in much the same way as did the Dutch. Castro's thinking about indigenous politics had been particularly influenced by a Portuguese memorandum known as the Sarzedas document (1811) (Castro 2010: 200; Hägerdal 2012: 52, 56–7, 60, 68, 408).³ Castro described a land whose population was divided up into "small republics" called *reinos*, generally translated as "kingdoms". Castro listed 49 such kingdoms subject to Portugal at the time. Every kingdom was ruled by a *liurai*. Each one was composed of a number of villages or *sucos* (Tetum: *suku*), which in turn were formed from a cluster of hamlets (Pt.: *aldeias*). Villages were ruled by *datos*, who were called *senhores da terra* (*rai na'in*; "lords of the land" or aristocrats); *tumungôes* was the term given to smaller, hamlet-level *datos*. Castro's interpretation of the island's political history, however, posited the village (*suco*) rather than the kingdom (*reino*) as the primal unit.

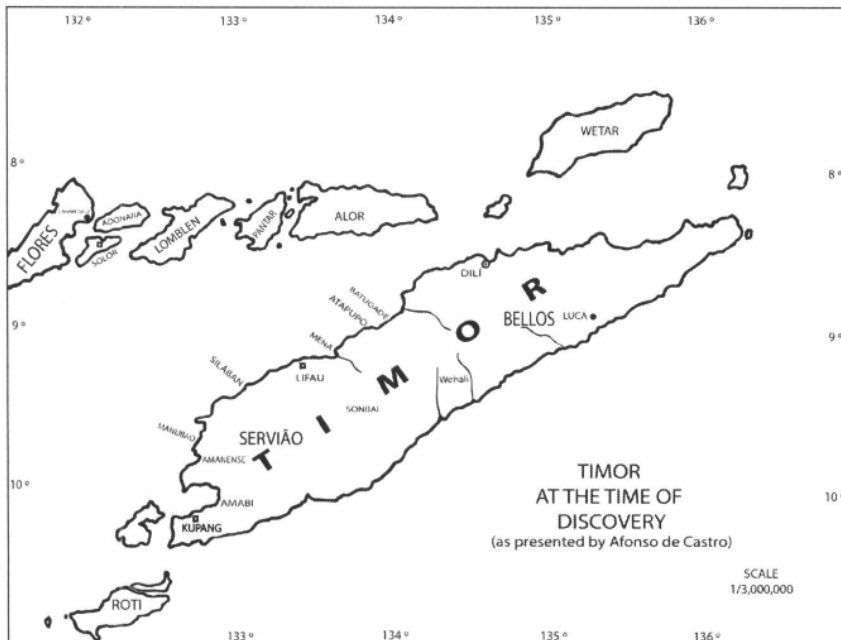
The power and status of the *datos*, and the fact that they are aristocrats [Pt.: *senhores da terra*], give us reason to believe that Timor used to be divided not into kingdoms [*reino*] but into villages [*sucos*], all of which were governed independently by *datos*. Some of these *datos* then subjugated nearby villages, and united them to form kingdoms, whose chiefs were the *liurai* ... So in the end government would assume the form it has today, that is, a sort of monarchy in which the *datos* would choose the *rei* [king] by order of succession, which made the monarchic office both elected and hereditary. The *rei* and the *datos* would then govern the kingdom in tandem (Castro 2010: 18).

On the basis of what today is likely to be construed as an erroneous projection of colonial spatial preconceptions onto an imagined "Timorese society"⁴, Castro went on to speculate on the constitution of political domains at an indeterminate, pre-European time, believing that:

Among the Timorese kings (*reis*) there must have been some more audacious and ambitious ones, who tried to bring neighbouring kingdoms under their rule, since the *liurai* of Wehali and Sonbai were recognised as emperors, to whom some kingdoms paid tribute. In effect this payment of tribute was enormously significant, and makes us believe that Wehali and Sonbai forced the submission of those kingdoms, without really maintaining the state of conquest, because apart from tribute the kingdoms

had no other ties to Wehali and Sonbai, which probably limited themselves to incursions and raids of the neighbouring lands (p. 19).

It was as if Castro were talking about the formation of two contiguous European nation states when he observed that Sonbai became the centre of “the western half” of the island—the “province” of Servião—and Wehali became the centre of the “eastern half”—the “province” of Bellos.⁵ The political cohesion of Servião and Bellos had been upset and dismantled in the 17th century but, wrote Castro, they “are terms which continue to this day, with almost all of Servião belonging to the Dutch, and all of Bellos to the Portuguese” (p. 19). In effect, Castro used his indigenous political reconstruction to reify the “administrative pyramid” of the colonial system with its political domains akin to nation states at the top, kingdoms at the intermediate level and *sucos* and constituent hamlets at the base. Across these spaces, Castro identified a ruling class, a commoner class (Pt.: *povo*) and a slave class that had come about as a result of “war and superstition” (p. 320).



Map 3 Timor at the time of the “discovery”, as presented in Felgas (1956) and adapted from Afonso de Castro’s *As Possessões Portuguezas na Oceania* (1867) [Portuguese Possessions in Oceania (1867)]

Castro described how the Portuguese had insinuated themselves into the kingdom power structure through designations of Portuguese military titles. The rank of colonel inhered in the office of king (*rei*) or, less commonly, queen (*rainha*) and the choice of one or the other required the confirmation of the governor (p. 315). Under the king-colonel, in hierarchical order, came lieutenant colonel, camp-master,⁶ sergeant-major, captain, major, lieutenant and sub-lieutenant. Some of these offices were replicated at the level of the village. Castro knew too well that, for the Timorese, these rankings were often symbolic, without correlation to Portuguese power.

Timorese Traditions

Castro understood that outside Dili authority was vested in local traditions. Kingdoms, he said, were “governed not by written laws but by customs and traditions [Pt.: *usos e tradições*], or what were called *estilos*, corresponding to the *adat* of the Malays” (p. 18). *Estilos* in Portuguese Timor were “unalterable traditions, nothing more than their habitual practices [*usos*] and customs [*costumes*] which the Timorese follow mechanically” (p. 430).⁷ In Castro’s usage, the term *estilos* carried a pronounced juridical meaning, referring not only to rituals connected to spiritual matters but also to social norms, etiquette and charismatic authority (Roque 2012a: 84n3). Castro (2010: 328–9) admitted that the Portuguese exercised almost no influence over *estilos* and internal kingdom politics. If he acknowledged any basis for Portuguese dominance, it was voluntary, given on account of the Timorese people’s “great veneration for the King of Portugal” and “their love and respect for the Portuguese”. This evidently constituted a weak basis for colonial power. Castro did not hide the fact that rebellions were commonplace, internecine warfare was rampant, kingdom borders were disputed, and disgruntled chiefs of the western kingdoms readily changed their allegiance to the Dutch (pp. xx, 314).

The situation was reflected in tax. The *finta*, an in-kind tax (paid in sandalwood, gold, maize, rice, wax or cloth), had been introduced by the Portuguese around 1710 and was built into the terms of vassalage of successive governors based in Lifau until 1769, and thereafter in Dili (Matos 1974: 127; see also Kammen 2017: 127). Castro complained that the collection of the *finta* had “always been difficult” and a perennial “motive for rebellions”. It was also

a primary cause of colonial dissatisfaction, for only “insignificant amounts” ended up in Portuguese coffers. Chiefs imposed the tax “in whichever way they chose”, “deciding how the burden should be distributed among the villages and making sure to ask for much more than the government demanded”. According to Castro (2010: 69), “the people paid a lot and the treasury received little, and when there were outcries, the government was blamed and not the indigenous chiefs, who by virtue of the *estilos* claimed extra contributions and expenses”. In sum: “Portuguese sovereignty does not exist on the island of Timor” and “instead of being sovereigns the Portuguese are no more than respected suzerains” (pp. xx–xxi).

Castro linked the perceived failure in colonial governance to the question of religion. The missionaries of the 16th and 17th centuries landed on “an island inhabited by people still in their infancy” with “no vestige of civilisation” (p. 19). Although missionaries “faced certain death” among the barbarous tribes, their “desire to come to Timor was great ... [and] they figured that the seed of the Gospel would result in an abundant harvest” (pp. 8–9). Castro described the difficulties in Christianising the native population. In one account, Father Antonio de S. Jacinto disembarked in Mena where “the queen [*rainha*] of the kingdom welcomed the missionary warmly ... but [her] reluctance led to a paltry yield [of converts among her people]” (p. 13). Castro held that “had she accepted her baptism, her people would have followed; but given her refusal ... few of her people dared to listen to Jacinto” (pp. 13–4). It took many years for the queen of Mena and her people to embrace the faith (see Hägerdal 2012: 150–1). That encouraged other coastal kingdoms to follow suit and “live under the protection of the Portuguese” (Castro 2010: 27–8). Patient, diplomatic proselytising, however, was not always the case. Missionaries organised punitive expeditions inland. Local armies were amassed, marches undertaken, villages burned, peace imposed, local rulers baptised, village churches constructed and vassalage accepted (p. 31). As “the fear of Christian power” spread over the island “other kingdoms asked for peace and friendship, converted to Christianity and became vassals of the Portuguese crown” (pp. 34–5).

These gains were evidently not sustained. Castro reported on Timorese betrayal and retaliation, of rebel kingdoms assassinating priests, burning churches, and desecrating the statues and holy vessels (p. 50). The situation was aggravated when the Portuguese “imprudently permitted gunpowder and firearms to enter Timor like

any other merchandise" (p. 33). Castro shared the view of an earlier governor, Alcoforado de Azevedo e Sousa (1815–19), who noticed that "even the baptised Timorese do not renounce the pagan rites [Pt.: *ritos da gentildade*]" (p. 295). Castro's historical sketch of flimsy Christianity was intended to underline his point about the present:

Today, and perhaps then, the people after baptism are as ignorant of the sublime nature of our faith. They become Christians just as they might become Moors. They are seduced by pomp and ceremony without being enlightened by faith; they delight in the priests' attire but cannot understand the symbolism in the sacrament. Nor does their understanding enable them to perceive the beauty of Christian precepts. To the Timorese, to be Christian is tantamount to being called José or João instead of Turo or Tete, or taking one's wife at the altar instead of taking her according to his *estilos* (pp. 28–9).

Castro believed that religious conversion in Timor had more effect on the political commitments of the Timorese than on their religious beliefs for, through conversion, "Portugal acquired subjects while the Church barely increased the number of faithful since the majority of converts were only nominally 'Christian'".⁸ (He did acknowledge that one genuine conversion among thousands of failures was nonetheless invaluable in the eyes of God.) Latter-day missionaries compounded the problem since, compared to the zealous and intrepid missionaries of the past, they had grown lax and self-interested, "caring little that ... abandoned Timorese Christians reverted to fetishism and forgot the commandments that the olden day missionaries had preached" (pp. 29–31). Castro would have been keenly aware that there were few priests left in Timor to remind the Timorese of the commandments; the Dominicans had been ordered out of Timor in 1834, and since then only a few, reputedly incompetent, Goan fathers had come (Davidson 1994: 36).

The "extreme attachment" of the Timorese to their customs was the very thing preventing Timorese from becoming genuine Christians. But Castro also surmised that despite the pleasure they took in Catholic ceremony, "they are convinced that the religion preached by foreigners is nothing but a means to subjugate them" and "they would enthusiastically embrace the creed if they did not suspect a ruse". He maintained that only the indigenous chiefs had the power to ease the suspicions of the inhabitants. "The light does not penetrate the dark recesses of their crude spirits and the

baptismal water does not soften the ferocity of their customs," he cried, sure of one thing only: becoming Christian was tantamount to changing one's name (Castro 2010: 316).

Castro saw a "possession" that after three centuries had adopted little from the Portuguese: "We have not created industry, nor developed commerce and agriculture, nor civilised the native population, nor secured our sovereignty" (p. xv). The indigenous kingdoms, Castro reiterated, were ruled only by their own *estilos*: those who stole cows faced decapitation; prisoners of war were made slaves; murderers compensated for their crime by giving to the victim's family a human replacement; those suspected of witchcraft or sorcery (*suanguice*)⁹ were mercilessly bludgeoned to death or buried alive, their families reduced to slavery and their belongings handed to the ruler or the accuser. The principle of "an eye for an eye" (Pt.: *a lei de talião*) dictated punishments for rape, adultery and homicide (pp. 318–9). Against these atrocities, the "superior Portuguese are powerless to have their rules respected, and must remain indifferent to these horrors, sanctioning these bloodthirsty *estilos* by staying silent in order not to be disobeyed when trying to suppress such cruelties" (p. xv).

Native law was tied to the "fetishism" practiced by the entire population of an estimated 100,000. Castro's descriptions conveyed his idea of fetishism. Every kingdom had "a sort of king priest [Pt.: *rei sacerdote*], called *rai luli* or *dato luli*, whose job is to remedy situations in the *pomali* [sacred house] ... call on the divinity and supplicate him to be propitious". The *rai luli* represented the office of all those "imposters who claim to tell the future, which in fact only God can do". He described the *pomali* as "a hut housing the idols" to which the Timorese "show considerable veneration". The idols included "small spears, stones, swords or any other object to which a certain mysterious quality is attached". Beyond the idols, Castro identified "a supreme being called Maromak, yet Timorese ideas on the power and attributes of that divinity remained "very obscure" (p. 317).

While in certain parts of Castro's text *estilos* and *usos e costumes* are used interchangeably, in other parts *estilos* denote a more formulaic level of social organisation. "By Timorese *estilos*, no man can have more than one wife ... but he is permitted concubines who must live separately"; marriage was "not yet an institution" but "a simple contract in which the woman is relinquished in exchange for buffalos, pigs, gold discs, silver bracelets and a specially tempered sword... which the Timorese value very highly" (p. 323). Castro

found "nothing special" about the marriages or the wedding ceremonies. After the relatives led the bride to the house of the groom, the two families celebrated the contract with a "huge feast, which lasts for days". "Men and women," observed the perceptive governor, "sit on their haunches around a fire devouring half-cooked pork and buffalo meat, while performers deafen everybody with their out-of-tune singing, accompanied by the monotonous beat of drums and endless dancing" (p. 324).

Timorese dance was known as *tebedai*. It was performed to celebrate not just marriage but "any extraordinary occasion". One suspects that by the time Castro had moved up to the new Governor's Palace at Lahane (alongside the new hospital and the school for the sons of indigenous chiefs), he had witnessed *tebedai* enough times to know that he did not like it.

Old women as well as young lasses participate in this *tebedai* dance. It has nothing in common with the European conception of dancing for enjoyment ... To give an idea of what dance in Timor entails requires no more than a few words. The women form a circle, and beating a rhythm on the drum, they go round taking small, rapid steps, singing at the same time or, better said, shouting words that are incoherent and meaningless (p. 324).

Castro was clearly taken with Javanese and Indian dance over the *tebedai*. In Java, "the women are dressed beautifully and they seduce the viewer as they twist about lasciviously to the sound of the percussion ensemble and sing the prowess of the heroic Javanese warriors". Instead of "voluptuous movements, delicate and precise choreography and the harmonious ensemble, Timor has the deafening drumming"; instead of "the historical song, the Timorese make incoherent and incomprehensible utterances". Only special women danced in Java, "but in Timor all the women and even the young girls take part". The governor was "astonished to behold the frenzied state that possesses them as they tirelessly carry on this exercise called *tebedai* for an entire day under the burning sun" (p. 324).

Castro's account of *tebedai* dancing resonated with his account of how the Timorese reacted to earth tremors, which he noted were "strong, frequent and terrifying": "When they feel one, men, women and children shout and scream as loudly as they can because, in all their ignorance and superstition, they think that all that hullabaloo will let God know that the island is still inhabited" (p. 302).

Castro's observations of Timorese ways extended to the practices surrounding dying and burial, particularly of the kings, which the governor described as "very weird". On this topic, Castro went into some detail, and I cite him at length for this was perhaps his finest ethnographic moment:

As soon as the king [Pt.: *rei*] has exhaled for the last time, the *datos* and the ritual priests [Tetum: *rai luli*; Pt.: *curandeiro*; witchdoctor] are called to his house to confirm that he is in fact dead ... Until the priests have delivered their decision, the family remains still; but as soon as he announces his death, all those present break out in heartfelt shouting, lamenting and weeping. Then the *datos* issue the command that all work in the fields cease for seven days, that nobody chew betel for the same period of time, that the men cut their hair and that the women wear their hair loose. They also dispatch messengers to all the deceased's relatives, advising them to come immediately to see the king ... After that the kingdom officials shut the corpse in a coffin and then all the women in the family wail day and night at the loss of their kinsman and ruler. After many days the relatives of the king arrive, and in the presence of the local population, the coffin is opened so that everybody can behold the decomposing corpse, which by now is exuding a pestilent stench to which the Timorese appear insensitive. The king's family then leaves the house, which remains closed until the burial. The burial may not take place for years, if they ever get around to it at all.

From the day of the king's death to the time of the relatives' visits, muskets are fired continuously, a custom that the Timorese certainly adopted from Europeans ... The visit of the king's relatives lasts as many days as the feast itself, which the family of the deceased is obliged to host. The number of buffalos, pigs and horses slaughtered to satisfy the voracious appetites of the guests is frightening, and there have been families that have been reduced to poverty as a consequence of the expenses imposed by the death of a family member.

Evidently, the Timorese have every intention of burying their dead kin, but to proceed with the burial all the relatives of the deceased must be in attendance, and since full attendance is almost impossible to arrange, the majority of the deceased go without interment and are destined to be stored in sealed coffins, in huts, or on a kind of cage perched on high posts. There are kingdoms in which the king's burial has not been effected for over a century for their not having managed to assemble all the relatives, since the absence of just one will render the funeral impossible (pp. 325-6).

From all this, Castro concluded that the "social condition" of the Timorese was "if not entirely savage, then extremely backward", and that 300 years of contact with the Portuguese had done nothing to mend their ways.

Of course, the Portuguese were not entirely to blame for their lack of colonial control, thought Castro as he reflected on indigenous nature. The Timorese were "grave", "meditative", "dim-witted", "distrustful", "indolent", "ungrateful", "unforgiving" and "vindictive"; they were "indifferent to everything, even death"; they were "humble when treated well" but "vengeful and cruel when not", they were "loafers" who would "endure any amount of suffering to avoid work"; they possessed "not an iota of courage" and "what looked like cold blood was but the absence of moral strength" (p. 327). Most of the time the Timorese spent not working in their fields but "attending to carnal pleasures" including "squatting all day long chewing betel nut"; their dwellings were "miserable", their diets inadequate, their agriculture rudimentary (pp. 321–2). In sum, wrote Castro generously, "the Timorese are not complete savages—nor were they when we first visited the island—but they remain a primitive people" (p. 313).

Governing, Coffee and Customs

For all their savage leanings, Castro was confident that the Timorese would be "easy to govern providing that [the colonial authorities] respect their *estilos* and refrain from using excessive force" (pp. 327–8). He nevertheless issued orders to ban or modify Timorese traditions that were anathema to Portuguese notions of what it meant to be civilised. He ruled, for instance, that the people bury their dead kin within 36 hours of their death. The bodies should be interred not in open terrain, as was customary, but in proper, fenced cemeteries. A certificate identifying the cause of death was to be issued and guards were to be assigned to keep watch over cemetery activities. This would ensure that murders could not be concealed from the Portuguese justice system, particularly murders premised on alleged witchcraft (Oliveira 1950: 68).

These slight interventions into "tradition" or *estilos* were unlikely to have meant much beyond Dili. Well aware of the impossibility of direct rule over the outlying kingdoms, Castro adopted a number of strategies. He established a school for the sons of the rulers of the kingdoms, knowing that the boys would grow up to become chiefs who would be fluent in the Portuguese language, well versed

in Portuguese history and sympathetic to colonial interests (p. 70). Castro would also put in place a system of territorial administration. In 1860 he divided the land into ten districts (adding an eleventh in 1863) into which all the kingdoms fell (pp. 7, 58, 63–5). A Portuguese commander was to be stationed in each district. At the commander's disposal would be an indigenous defence force, to be supplied by the *liurai* of the constituent kingdoms. But, Castro decreed, the district commander was neither above nor below those native rulers. Rather the commander would cooperate with them to administer justice, resolve minor issues, punish or fine offenders, maintain peace and collect tax. The commanders were ordered not to interfere in indigenous affairs (Figueiredo 2004: 299, 327–9; Oliveira 1950: 58–61). Castro (2010: 430) emphasised that “any system that does not offend the Timorese *estilos* will be well received, but a system that undermines them will lead to invincible opposition”. In other words, Castro sought not outright dominance over kingdoms, but productive alliance with them (see Kammen 2017: 127–8).

This system of administration was tailored to promote coffee, the cultivation of which the commanders would oversee through regular inspections in the kingdoms. The commanders would also support bureaucrats from the new Department of Agriculture in their distribution of seed, building of nurseries and earmarking of land for coffee cultivation in the kingdoms deemed suitable. In those, each family would be required to grow 600 coffee bushes. The government would purchase the coffee at fixed prices from the growers while the *liurai* would receive a substantial cut (Davidson 1994: 91). The governor predicted that within four years an annual production of over 2,000 tons would attract “not Makassen boats in the port of Dili but ships from the nations of Europe”. Agricultural development would lead to industry, commerce and road construction into the interior. White settlers would flood in to “impart their standards to the indigenous race”, who “now stationary or even slipping backwards, would come to obey the universal law of progress” (Castro 2010: 374–6, 431–6).

Most of this turned out to be fanciful. However, elements of Castro's grand plan were indeed implemented and Castro personally visited some nearby kingdoms in 1962 to assess the progress of his new administrative system (Oliveira 1950: 53). After Castro's departure, incoming governors would discover just how precarious was Castro's administrative overlay (Thomaz 2017: 212–3). Kingdoms continued to fight each other, stage revolts against the state and ignore

tribute. Portuguese authority and resources remained inadequate to enforce cultivation along the lines suggested by Castro. So, only a fraction of Castro's ambitious projections would be realised over coming decades. That was nevertheless sufficient for coffee production to increase steadily, reaching an all-time peak of over 2,500 tons in 1881 (Davidson 1994: 69, 88, 91–2; Felgas 1956: 60).

Over and above coffee output, Castro's long-term influence cannot be underestimated. He laid important groundwork for the territorial administration of the colony; he firmly institutionalised the perspective that indigenous "customs" had to be finely calibrated to match the level of colonial power, avoid indigenous resistance and maximise efficiency; he would cement the idea into the colonial imagination that the future of Timor depended on coffee; and he would set the precedent that ethnography serve as an instrument of governance. Castro's own ethnography-of-sorts, however, does not say much about how the Timorese responded to the Portuguese presence; it does, however, demonstrate that he set the stage for greater colonial intervention into the hinterlands, which was a first step towards what in successive chapters will be revealed as transformative animism.

2

The Naturalist (An ethnography of obstructions)

After almost three years of voyaging around the Cocos-Keeling Islands, Java, Sumatra, the Moluccas and the Tanimbar Islands, Scottish naturalist Henry Ogg Forbes (1851–1932) and his wife, Annabella, sailed into Dili on 19 December 1882. When greeted by their acquaintances,¹ Governor Bento da França and his family, the Forbes couple were “above measure saddened to see their terribly emaciated countenances, which proclaimed more forcibly than words, the pestiferous nature of the climate” (Forbes 1989 [1885]: 415); one of the França’s daughters, little Marie (“who used to prattle so prettily”), had not survived “the deadly influence” (A. Forbes 1991 [1887]: 229). Deterred by the Dili heat, “the pestilence that nightly rises from the marshes” and “the depressing effect of the fever-stricken condition of the Europeans”, Henry and Anna hastened to the cooler airs. Less than one day’s horseback ride from Dili, in the Fatunaba Hills, Henry found “a landscape whose great beauty [he was] utterly unprepared for” (Forbes 1989: 415–6).

They made their base there on a plateau, which held a commanding view over the islands of Ataúro, Wetar and Alor. Their bamboo hut was constructed by “twenty-three uncouth mountaineers” who “had never done so continuous a piece of work in their lives before” (p. 420). It was, said Anna (A. Forbes 1991: 248), less a hut than a “miserable shanty, fit for the last days of a worn-out negro”. When “the work was quite finished they demanded a pig to celebrate the event, in accordance with custom” (Forbes 1989: 420). But, stated Henry,

... as I had neither flocks nor herds they had to forage in the neighbourhood, whence one of them returned shortly with a nice fat specimen on the point of his spear, which despite our most urgent protestations and threats, they cut up and divided in their own savage way on our new and deliciously clean verandah (p. 420).

This was Henry's first brush with "custom"—which he duly cut short with a bribe of *kanipa* (coarse gin) such that he and Anna "were relieved of the pleasure of seeing them cook and devour it" (p. 420).

So begin the final chapters (Part Six) of Henry Forbes' travelogue, *A Naturalist's Wanderings in the Eastern Archipelago* (1989 [1885]). Presented as a narrative of travel and exploration, Part Six is replete with intriguing encounters with matters of custom in Timor. To complement her husband's writings, Anna had kept a diary, later published as *Unbeaten Tracks in Islands of the Far East: Experiences of a Naturalist's Wife in the 1880s* (A. Forbes 1991 [1887]). Through these works, we travel with the naturalist and his wife, initially to the Fatunaba Hills where the mountain slopes and precipitous ravines and dense forests became Henry's personal "hunting grounds". There, Henry found plants and lichens that his British predecessor Alfred Wallace had not seen, and birds that for their beauty the kindly Henry could not bring himself to destroy (Forbes 1989: 422). Anna, meanwhile, was serving her "apprenticeship as a naturalist" and had made such progress that she could now "net a bee without getting stung" and knew "the proper way to grasp a beetle" (A. Forbes 1991: 269).

Henry and Anna settled down in their hut-with-a-view amongst the "offensive", "threatening" and "thieving" natives, whose characters "did not gain favourably" on them, and by whose hair (frizzy or straight) and size (tall or stumpy) it was impossible to detect "a purity of race" (Forbes 1989: 424–5). Henry persisted with his excursions in the neighbourhood for just over three months. Anna took charge of the drying of specimens. As the wet season abated, the better weather would permit Henry to go deep into the upland kingdoms. (Henry was told there were 47 kingdoms in all, while Anna, not seeing anything resembling "true royalty", opined that "district" was the more fitting term.) The governor provided him with transport ponies and an escort. Among the escort were two Goan men: one a corporal and the other an officer. They would serve as his guides and interpreters and "without [them] as representing the Government",

Henry acknowledged that the journey would have been "an absolute impossibility" (pp. 425, 480). In each kingdom they passed through, the *liurai* should appoint one of his men to take responsibility for Henry's person and possessions. The basis of Henry's "own authority" would be "a friendly and most plenary document" addressed to all the *liurai* that he should meet during the journey (p. 425). Meanwhile, Anna would be left in the Fatunaba shanty in the care of "a creature more like a monkey than a human being—an old, shrivelled and very small woman". Women did not serve in Timor and not even female servants could be contracted in Dili, Anna explained, so, however "ape-like" this woman was, Anna was glad the woman forewent tending the coffee plantation so she could have female companionship (A. Forbes 1991: 275; Forbes 1989: 426).

The Burial Rites of Sauo

After kissing Anna farewell, Henry and his escort set off in cavalcade on 30 March 1883 (A. Forbes 1991: 247). In what would amount to a five-week circuit of the hinterlands, they began by heading in an easterly direction. Just before sundown they reached the high plateau of Erlura at 3,500 feet above sea level (Forbes 1989: 428). The Scottish naturalist had just enough time to collect "the herbaceous plants which dotted the ground" before turning in for the night. The ponies were picketed close to the campfire, for the Timorese, he noted, were so adept at horse-stealing that they could whisk a pony away even in the presence of the owner. Indeed, "the astute thieves among them have obtained the reputation of being *swangies* [sorcerers], who have the power of making their bodies invisible". Keeping the ponies tethered close was "not an unnecessary precaution" as the guard had heard "suspicious whistle calls" during the night (p. 429).

The next day they veered inland, "climbing ... along hog's-back ridges and round precipitous gorges", up Mount Tahula at 4,200 feet and over a saddle to Kelehoko at 4,600 feet, where Henry was most taken by the violets, geraniums and a new species of orchid (p. 430). Wending down the valley of Komai, they met rain and overnighted at a cluster of houses belonging to a native who had "been over all this country during various revolts". Henry described the houses, raised on sturdy pillars, with the floor projecting beyond the walls forming a platform under the eaves. He described the stall-like divisions inside, closed off by curtains, and noted that "a spot

is always railed off for the sacred (*luli*) spear, knife and gun, before which the head of the house makes a propitiatory offering to speed his particular undertakings" (p. 431). High in the trees outside, Henry noticed granaries and depositories "little subject to the depredations of rats ... but ... most tempting ... to every prowling thief". "It may be," mused he, "that they are protected by the sanctity of taboo—or, in their own language, are *luli*." Henry did not state of which language was the word *luli*, but he had learned that there were 40 different languages in Timor and that "nearly every kingdom [had] its own dialect" (pp. 425–6).²

The next morning the cavalcade went "zigzagging down land-slipped gorges" to reach the wide Komai River. They then ascended the steep Ligidoik Mountain, taking their lunch at 3,400 feet in the barricaded dwelling of a "sub-chief" of the kingdom of Motael (the long-time ally of the Portuguese). Torrential rain kept them there for the night. From that vantage point

the whole country within the sweep of an eye was of a most singular conformation, being entirely composed of knife-edges, peaks, and precipitous slopes of deep valleys. It surprised me to observe that it was the most inaccessible peaks and isolated crags that were crowned by dwellings, hidden from sight generally among groves of trees. It was easy to see that I was travelling in a lawless land where every man's hand was against his neighbour, and where therefore every man was constantly and restlessly on the outlook (p. 432).

The following day the company hiked down to Vekélé and then up to Lebetutu into grassless country that gave onto the wide valley of Wai-Matang-Kaimauk, just beyond which they arrived at the *dato's* residence in the village (*suco*) of Sauo. Henry appeared not to wonder why this place was called a *suco*, what *suco* really meant in practice, whether he was happily and safely passing through it precisely because it had attained the status of a *suco*, and for how long it might have actually been a *suco*—not long at all, by one account (Kammen 2017: 129). Entering the homestead, Henry thrashed his way past pigs and goats, unaware that they awaited slaughter for a burial rite. When the *dato* arrived,

the first civility and token of friendship that passed between the chief and my Hindu [Goan] guide, as representing me, was the exchange of [pepper leaf, betel nut] and chalk. Each prepared his quantum, and stuffed it into his mouth, but before adding to

it the chalk, of which each had taken the proper quantity into the hollow of his hand, "Maman?" (may I eat?), said my guide, with an obeisance, following the proper etiquette, to which the *dato* replied, "Maman" (eat). This little ceremony had an instant effect in loosening the tongues of our hosts, who kept up an unbroken dialogue till long after dark (Forbes 1989: 435).

Henry learned that bundles left suspended high in a tree were the *dato's* dead relatives awaiting burial; this now explained the large assembly of pigs and goats. Among those to be interred was the *dato's* own father, who had apparently been hanging there for 30 years. The forthcoming burial had to follow the hierarchical prescriptions of the "death-and-burial-feast":

If the defunct have been a lowly person with few relatives, a small feast will suffice to satisfy the demands of custom. If, however, he have been of some rank, with many relatives and a wide acquaintance, these must be on a scale commensurate with his position; and so serious are the demands that custom requires, that the death feast alone often reduces the family to abject poverty, necessitating the delay of the funeral for months, years, or even a whole century, till such time, in fact, as the relatives and descendants are able to provide the necessary costly feast (p. 435).

If the son dies before the father is interred, Henry continued, the responsibility is passed on to his heir and "the knowledge of who is who among the various dangling remnants of humanity is handed down". When "at last sufficient buffaloes, pigs, goats, Indian corn, rice and *kanipa* for a feast in accordance with the rank of the deceased have been amassed", the body is "committed to the grave amid the firing of guns and the wailing of women".

In an idiom and tone reminiscent of Castro's *As Possessões Portuguezas na Oceania* (1867), Henry described the drunken ceremony in which "the buffaloes and horses, sheep and pigs are ruthlessly butchered to satisfy the insatiable appetites of these savages, who devour it half-cooked, and whose drink ... is confined to the strongest and coarsest arrack". The women dance around beating their drums "thoroughly excited", "shouting and bawling out unintelligible words and sentences", while the men, dressed in their "war feathers and accoutrements" and "brandishing their swords", join in the "drunken and demoniacal scene" (cf. Traube 1986: 16). In the "mad frenzy", added Henry as if he had seen all this with his own eyes,

"the Timorese appear as pure savages" (Forbes 1989: 436). After, the skulls and cheekbones of the slain herds are spread over the ground above the grave, and, for persons of eminence, a wooden pole punctured with holes had jawbones and horns inserted along its length. Such a pole, Henry noticed, was that belonging to the grave of the grandfather of the *dato* of Sauo.

Henry was intrigued by the way the Timorese construed sickness: "Like the Australians, the Timorese cannot understand why any one should ever die unless he be killed, so they attribute both sickness and natural death to the influence of some malevolent existence, which they believe eats up the spirit of the blighted person." The spirit-culprit, Henry said building slightly on Governor Castro's discussion of the matter, materialises in the *swangi* (sorcerer), a person "whom their fanaticism easily discovers".

As soon as the sick man has died, the *swangi* (or person in whom the evil spirit had taken up its residence and who is considered to be in collusion with it) ... used with his whole family to be seized ... bound hand and foot, and either impaled or buried alive, and their goods confiscated for the benefit of the accusers and the lords of the soil [native rulers or aristocrats] (p. 438).

Henry noted that the Portuguese had since prohibited the seizure of alleged sorcerers, and assumed that the practice of attacking "sorcerers" had stopped. Yet we know from other sources that the practice was still rife, however much the Portuguese tried to prevent it (Kammen 2015: 62; Nixon 2013: 170–1).³

The Sacred Houses of Turiscai

The cavalcade pressed on for two more days, clambering up mountains and sliding down them. Lost in mist, they stumbled upon a native "whom luckily we caught unawares before he could make off". Henry persuaded him to guide them to the *liurai* of Turiscai in exchange for a "gaudy kerchief". They followed the guide down slippery clay until they reached a stream in the deep ravine of Maukuda, whose southward flow told Henry that they had "crossed the water-shed of the country". He chanced upon a French marigold, "a widespread plant, hailing from Mexico originally". But "how did it reach the interior of Timor", the mystified Henry pondered, "growing wild far from coast influence or the highways of the world?" (Forbes 1989: 440). (And how did Henry get to the interior of Timor? pondered

the equally mystified French marigold.) More dangerous ravines revealed to the enthralled collector so many bright herbs, flowering shrubs and lovely ferns that he "mourned that [he] had not arms big enough to embrace specimens of all [he] might have gathered". "In the happiness of gathering these familiar forms of flowers", Henry "quite forgot the steepness of the ascent" and his "weariness of limb". He drew towards the royal enclosure of the "native potentate" of Turisca, which lay at 4,500 feet "in a pretty circular grassy plateau in the hollow of the mountain tops". Henry and company stayed in the *guarda*, a dwelling "erected for the accommodation of high personages passing through the kingdom, and therefore assigned to us". He sent his Goan corporal off to the *liurai's* residence to announce his presence at the *guarda* homestead and to explain that he was "on the service of the Government". The *liurai* deferred their meeting until the morning but assigned an official of the kingdom to attend to Henry's every want. The homestead "could not have been less comfortable or much more filthy", for "dogs and cats had evidently made it their lair" and "the rain penetrated everywhere". That night was a sleepless one (p. 441).

Henry was roused at dawn by the sound of drums. He then made for the crest of a nearby hill, charging "through a strong barricaded enclosure in which were several apparently closed up and uninhabited houses".

It was some minutes before it struck me that I was in the presence of, to me, the most interesting of their buildings and their most sacred institution—which I had seen, but without learning anything about, at Sauo—the *Uma-Luli*, a designation which I scarcely know how to translate other than by Pomali House ... I am extremely doubtful whether it is to be reckoned among their really *religious* institutions or not. It has connection with the practice of *Taboo*, but whether it has been introduced into this island along with a race that migrated from the Pacific, or has arisen *de novo* among themselves I am unable to conjecture. It is just possible that on their own customs they may have grafted an imitation of some of the rites of the Romish ritual, which has now more or less been known to them for 300 years (p. 442).

Henry noted that the large *uma luli* were attached to the residential precinct of the *liurai* in each kingdom, and were "flanked by two others, or occasionally by more, if the kingdom [was] large" (p. 443). They stood on elevated ground, enclosed by a thick fence in a cleared

space surrounded by forest. And "under the fear of the vengeance of the *luli* [spirit]", no twig could be cut, no tobacco could be lit and no buffalo or horse may enter. These large bamboo edifices were raised on pillars, were decorated with buffalo crania and possessed two doors. The *dato luli* or the *rai luli* conducted the "sacred rites" inside these houses, while during ordinary times an old man or woman caretaker, a *luliata*, lived within; a married couple could guard the *uma luli* during the day, but only one of the two could stay in during the night. Henry was not permitted to peek inside.

It is not very easy to obtain a good idea of the interior arrangements of the *Uma-Luli*, as it is impossible for heretics to get within it, or often very near it. Even natives of Timor who have become nominally *Sirani* (Christian) are prohibited from entering it; but by sedulously questioning those who knew, I was able to gather that of the two doors (whose direction does not seem to be a matter of importance), one is reserved for the *dato luli*, or chief priest, and the other for the persons consulting the fates to enter (p. 443).

Henry learned that the *dato luli* entered through his special door into a separate section of the house where "different articles of veneration" were kept—the cranium of a buffalo, a spear, an axe, a shield. There was also "a gun, and of an old, old pattern". Henry's informant affirmed that, despite its falling to pieces, the gun was "more powerful than any other gun, however new". Besides these items there was a bag containing the vestments of the priest: a broad band of scarlet cloth for his head; a circular golden breastplate, worn suspended from the neck; two gold discs, about 15 centimetres in diameter, to cover the ears; a broad crown of gold, with two long buffalo-like horns projecting from it; and gold armlets and earrings. Sacred vessels and utensils were also stored inside. Within the enclosure Henry identified the sacred stone (*fatuk lulik*) on which offerings to "the invisible deity" were placed. He understood that the Timorese were given such stones at the time when the universe began (pp. 443–4).

Ordinary sickness, Henry gathered, was dealt with privately, from one's own house, a part of which was partitioned off to store venerated objects, or from the family *uma luli*, which could figure as one in a cluster of houses (pp. 442–3). The offering of a fowl or a pig would suffice to appeal to the *luli*. Similarly, a man would sacrifice a pig or fowl in his own *luli* house before the sowing of the rice or Indian corn, laying a piece of the sacrificed animal's flesh

on the sacred stone. For more serious matters—perhaps if a family member had died—a man would seek the priest's permission to consult with the *luli*. At these times, the man in distress would appear giving rice and a fowl to the *dato luli*; each would enter the *uma luli* by his respective door; the *dato* would don his proper attire; the flesh of the animal's heart would be placed on the stone while the rest of the animal would be cooked along with rice inside the *luli* house; they would share the food; and the *dato* would speak directly to the *luli*. After that, wrote Henry, the *dato* gives the applicant pepper leaf and betel nut "with the assurance that the sickness will depart or his difficulty disappear" (p. 444). "Their belief in a supernatural Presence resident in the *Luli*-house is absolute" (p. 446).

Their absolute belief Henry was able to demonstrate with another story, the timing of which is important. For several years there had been a resurgence of missionary activity after a hiatus of many decades, ever since the Dominicans had been ordered to leave Timor in 1834 (Davidson 1994: 38, 152). Recently, a Catholic father on a proselytising mission had arrived to the spot where Henry now stood. He demanded from the local people that "the *Luli* house be dismantled and its profane ornaments cleared out". No one would obey his command, so the adamant priest barged into the house to extract the "ornaments" himself. Alas, no sooner had the priest set foot inside the door to "commit the sacrilegious act that nobody else dared to do" than he was "threatened by the sacred spear, sword and gun in invisible hands, while the altar-stone bounded about through the building so menacingly that he was glad to beat a retreat!" Henry learned all this from an informant who exhibited "the most perfect belief in his own statements" (Forbes 1989: 446). We can excuse Henry-the-naturalist for not considering the story to be true. (We can also excuse him for not being a modern-day relativist, who might have pointed out that the story arose as local vindication of *luli* power, as a deterrence to other like-minded priests or even as a warning to Henry himself.)

At this point in the narrative, Henry was still in Turiscai, but the *liurai* had not graced the naturalist with his presence. In the meantime, Henry expanded his herbarium collection with "some very rare species, such as *Hypoxis hygrometrica*, *Wollastonia asperima*, and an *Ophioglossum* fern". When the *liurai* finally appeared, Henry felt let down, for "although not without some dignity, there was little to distinguish him from those around him". (Had he anticipated a *liurai* king with a crown of jewels and golden robes, as befitting an

English king?) Nevertheless, the *luirai* managed some Portuguese and when showed a compass, Henry was surprised by his intelligence: "Why the magnetic needle turned always to the same point puzzled him beyond measure, and I could see that my reply, that Maromak [indigenous deity as well as the Christian God] made it so, was not altogether satisfactory to him" (p. 447).⁴ By virtue of the *liurai*'s regular visits to Dili, he had become a Catholic. Yet he remained "a follower of the pagan rites of his own people". Henry found the same contradiction represented in the village architecture, for "to see over against the *Luli* temple, a lone and uncomprehended symbol of the Christian faith in front of a small, neglected bamboo edifice representing a chapel of its worship, could not but raise strange reflections in the breast of a European traveller". Upon leaving Turiscail on 6 April, Henry was struck by the rich carpet of green grass "on which thousands of sheep might be pastured with great profit" (p. 448).

With the southern sea now in sight from the high slopes of Rusconna, the company made for the sharp peak of Tahaolat and, beyond that, the kingdom of Bibiçuçu. When the cavalcade passed a group of men, Henry noticed "a hard stare" between one of his servants (who hailed from Bibiçuçu) and the group. The servant revealed that these were "Braves", and when Henry asked him how he knew, he replied nonchalantly: "The tallest of them cut off my father's head in their war with Bibiçuçu." "Do you not feel any rancour towards him? Don't you wish to have it out with him now?" enquired the astonished Henry. "Oh no!" exclaimed the servant. "The two kingdoms are now at peace; each has given back the heads they took, long ago" (p. 450).

Henry employs this anecdote to introduce the Timorese custom of headhunting between enemy kingdoms, usually those not united by blood-oaths or marital ties, or those unable to solve their disputes peaceably. Since the people are cowardly, said Henry, "they never fight in the open but from behind trees and crags ... pillaging and ravaging all they can lay hands on, robbing every undefended dwelling, ruthlessly decapitating helpless men, women and children, and even infants" (p. 451). Heads, Henry went on, are then triumphantly carried home and are preserved by removing the brain and drying the flesh over a fire. Each head a brave warrior displays wins him a gold disc. Peace is restored with the return of the heads, at which point a "boisterous feast" takes place accompanied by the "heavy drinking" and "wild dancing of the Tabédu [*tebedai*]". Any missing

head must be compensated ... otherwise amicable relations "could scarcely be restored, certainly not without a very heavy price for the missing skull" (p. 452).⁵

In the Kingdom of Bibiçuçu

Just one more mountain had to be overcome before reaching the kingdom of Bibiçuçu. Midway up Mount Ailor (4,200 feet), Henry inspected a pond full of ducks, and at this point the reader is introduced to the idea of *luli* land. The ducks' "very tameness and utter disregard of us might have told me, even if I had not been carefully warned, that they were on *Luli* ground, where I dare not shoot; even the scarlet algae covering the surface of the water, it was sacrilege to touch" (p. 453). Leaving the ducks and algae alone, Henry rode on. Negotiating the long descent from Ailor, the company entered the kingdom of Bibiçuçu. They were assigned a homestead perched atop an abutment, from where the great expanse of the southern coast was in view, from Cape Luca in the east to Alas in the west. The *liurai* was absent and his stand-in, the Rajah Katuas, proved unwelcoming. Tactfully, Henry did not reprove him for his rude behaviour since he intended to linger around Bibiçuçu for several weeks, not only on account of the flora and fauna but also the "curious customs that prevailed among the people" (p. 454).

On one excursion across the Kaimauk River, the Scottish naturalist noticed an alteration in the plant life—fewer melaleucas and more casuarinas and acacias. Henry detected that wherever

considerable patches of trees have attained the dignity of wood, one may be sure that there the land is *Luli*—sacred territory—where, if he is permitted to enter, the botanist may not break or cut a single branch. These spots—often the highest peaks of mountains—having been *lulied* for generations, must be the richest store-houses of all the rarest plants and trees in their localities. How aggravating to the spirit it was to be prevented from collecting there it is needless to describe (p. 454).

Nevertheless, Henry's busy collecting went on,

enlivened by the sound of happy singing from the fields, which [were] on all sides during my stay in the height of the rice harvest ... [E]very one—old men, women and children—comes out to help [in the harvest]. The older people in the centre of a long line, with the youths on the one hand and the maidens

on the other, advance from the margin of the field, stripping off between their fingers the grains ... into little baskets carried in the hand. The older men strike up a song, to which the youths and maidens sing a chorus, while sometimes the youths sing, and are replied to by the maidens, in more or less amorous strains. Behind this line two carriers bear an immense basket for the reception of the contents of the smaller ones in the hands of the reapers, who call out when these are filled. When the crop is all gathered a great feast—called *Sallalah*—is given, at which immense quantities of the new and sweet rice are consumed, along with pig or goat flesh and abundant libations of *kanipa*, followed by music and dancing throughout the entire night (pp. 454–5).

If rice was common on the plains, Henry discovered that Indian corn grew in abundance on the higher slopes and its cultivation was similarly steeped in ceremony. Prior to the sowing

a fowl or a small pig is sacrificed in the *Luli* chamber of the owner's house and a rich head of rice and Indian corn suspended as an invocation for a bountiful harvest. It amused me to observe how meanly they had occasionally tricked their invisible spirit by offering only a husk of maize from which all the corns had been carefully picked! ... [W]hen the grain has all been gathered, the greatest *Luli* feast of the year takes place, at which a buffalo is offered by the *dato* in the great *Luli* house of the *suku* [village] as a harvest thanksgiving (p. 455).

Such religious invocations might have accentuated Henry's hunger, for in the absence of the *liurai* of Bibiçuçu the people had shirked their responsibility to attend to his culinary needs. One day, after going "without a particle of food for a whole day", Henry "took the law into [his] own hands by shooting the first large fat pig" he came across. That the pig belonged to the *liurai* could have been most unfortunate. However, Henry learned that since his hunger was deemed to have arisen from the negligence of those who had been entrusted to look after him, the wrong had to be expiated not by the offending individual but by a fine levied on the people.

This incident is one which well illustrates how near a traveller seeking for information of an abstract kind, may be to missing some of the most characteristic and interesting of the laws and customs of a people, and how only by a lucky chance or mischance in the most unexpected way he may light on fundamental facts ... (p. 457).

Henry felt "fortunate enough to gain also much information about the curious connubial relations prevailing in this part of the island", but admits nothing of the lucky chance that might have revealed that information.

In full view was the towering peak of Mount Kabalaki in the adjacent kingdom of Manufahi. That Henry believed that mountain, at 10,000 feet, to be the highest in all Portuguese Timor gives some indication that the geography of this land was little more known then than in Governor Castro's day (p. 448). The naturalist in Henry "wistfully gazed" at Kabalaki and longed to climb to its summit, for it "must support a flora the most interesting of all Eastern Timor". However, his Goan guide refused to take him there; not only were Lamkito robbers known to "skulk in the long grass", but Manufahi and Bibiçu were on the brink of war (p. 461). (One wonders to what extent Henry's circuitous route through Timor was determined by the need to evade warring kingdoms or keep to kingdoms whose allegiance to the Portuguese was not in question at the time.)

Henry's travels were destined to follow another path. His next stop in the kingdom of Bibiçu was at the market of Makalaha, held weekly under the casuarina trees. As Henry approached, deafening screaming among the women and children broke out, spreading an alarm that resulted in "a stampede" (p. 461). In Henry had they perhaps seen a ghost? Henry's officer dashed out among them to shout reassurances: Mr Forbes was "only passing by, and was in no way going to meddle with them". Meanwhile, the naturalist sat down to arrange his collected plants between paper, growing so absorbed in his activity that he was unaware of the people crowding around him to watch an activity that, for them, might have carried ritualistic, spiritual implications:

By slow degrees, first one, then another and another, enticed like so many monkeys by curiosity, crept in about to see the, to them, strange performance, and as I differed little from an ordinary human being they forgot their fright, and in a little while the market was proceeding in its accustomed way, through which I then strolled quietly with open and interested eyes (p. 461).

The marketplace consisted of "a wild and savage-like crowd" of between 200 and 300 people. All the men wore a loincloth. This was a "vindictive people ... without a vestige of pity", thought the civilised Henry after observing "the flashing eyes and passionate mien

of [a] wild savage" who harboured a "vendetta against a man who had luckily escaped the marketplace within a hair of his life" (p. 464).

Henry crossed to a place called Saluki. There ran a river reputed to contain more gold than anywhere else in Timor. It also turned out to be "rigidly *Luli*", for no one could approach it "without first sacrificing a pig or fowl". In only one month of the year was "gold-washing" permitted, and only then after "one of their most solemn ceremonials".

Before deciding on a day to commence the gold-washing, some of the children—in order, as I imagine, that no suspicion may be awakened among the river spirits that the search is intended—are sent to report whether the river is sufficiently low. On their return the people are assembled, and public proclamation made—"Oh! ho! ho! four days hence we go to gather gold." [Forbes forgot to reference *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.] On that day the *dato luli*, dressed in all the vestments of his office, proceeds to the top of the curious Peak of Fatunaruk, where a flat stone exists which is supposed to be the most sacred altar in the kingdom. Behind him follow all the people—men, women, and children. The older men seat themselves on the ground nearer to the *dato*, the women, children, and younger men keeping at a respectful distance. The *dato luli*, then in front of the great stone, invokes the Spirits of their dead, Maromak of the heavens, and Him of the earth. All then return to their homes, where each acting as his own "house priest", kills a fowl or a small pig, and offers on the *Luli* stone in his own house, which he then carries to the river to wash the auriferous sand over (pp. 467–8).

Since "Maromak ... alone gives gold," added Henry quoting an unidentified person, these processes assure that "every one finds gold on that day—more or less" (p. 468).

Henry and cavalcade departed Saluki on 26 April in the direction of Fatuboi, and after a steep ascent from the Mata-ai River and then squeezing through "a narrow rocky stairway winding through a belt of impenetrable jungle", the company entered "the most weird spot conceivable for human habitation". It was a mountain plateau flanked on all sides by inaccessible pinnacles, riven in all directions by fathomless chasms and forbidding caves. In front of one cave, "an aged fig-tree ... had dropped its tendrils and wound its roots into every crevice in weird and gruesome shapes" (pp. 469–70).

The place was just such as would overawe the timid and superstitious native mind, and I was not surprised to see that there were nearly as many *Luli* houses as dwellings, and that before the door of the cave stood a *Luli* stone on which to propitiate the spirits that haunted their gloomy recesses. The whole summit ... looked as if it had been shattered to its very foundation by some gigantic convulsion of nature. The natives told me that earthquakes, which were the result of Maromak nodding, and letting the world slide off the straight for a moment, were frequent and severe (p. 470).

Even Henry seemed a little overawed by the whole scene, until a butterfly fluttered over. This *Cethosia lamarkii* hovered tantalisingly just beyond his reach over a precipice. His "heart palpitating with pleasure", he finally succeeded in netting it just as a lively grey monkey "chattered and squeaked most lustily" at his intrusion (p. 471).

A Naturalistic Transgression of *Luli* in Samoro

It was 28 April. Henry's collections were weighing him down, so more porters were called on before finally leaving the kingdom of Bibiçuçu and striking out in a north-easterly direction to the kingdom of Samoro. Henry contented himself with "botanising" around Samoro for a few days. Then, on 30 April, accompanied by the *liurai*'s son, he began the plod to the summit of Sobale. After resting at Manulu, they valiantly rounded the head of Buarahu, a dangerous, dilapidated and land-slipped ridge; "a single stumble of our ponies would have left nothing between us and a fall of 2,000 feet to the river bed". Gaining to 5,000 feet, Henry turned his attention to violets, geraniums and labiates covering the ground, and the profusion of trees and ferns on the uppermost 2,000 feet of the mountain. Alas, to his "infinite disgust and disappointment", Henry overheard the *liurai*'s son issue a warning to Henry's interpreter that all the forest was *luli*, "boding ill for [the] next day's prospects". The wilful Henry thus resolved to slip away from camp before sunrise the next day to ascend the mountain in stealth (p. 475).

So, Henry awoke early, dressed quietly and, with his corporal, crept outside, vanishing into the dense mist. No sooner did he think that they had escaped unnoticed, he realised that the *dato* and a throng of followers were coming after them. "There was no time to be lost!", so Henry "hewed away right and left on the slopes below the summit, building up a high pile on the ground of the most

delightful specimens". Perceiving that the crowd watched in silence from a fair distance the "unwonted operations of a white man, the first who had probably ever ascended their mountain", Henry hoped that he had misunderstood what he overheard the day before. But "it was a vain delusion; for their low murmured reproaches at last found distinct utterance in complaint and remonstrance". His corporal was ordered to restrain the naughty Henry and "save [himself] as well as them from the retribution of sickness and death that certainly would follow on the violation of the sacred precincts" (p. 475). Henry sent his interpreter to tell them that he would desist from further collections. Yet refusing to retreat, he scrambled further up the mountain

to a new clump, which perhaps *might* not be *Luli*, and like a drowning man catching at his last opportunity, I gathered with a will, unhindered for a long time; and it was not till I had another great pile heaped up on the ground that their excitement and superstitious fears became too marked to be longer disregarded ... It was useless to attempt to force an ascent to the top; there would have been an outbreak for the crest of the mountain was evidently one of their most sacred spots (p. 476).

Loaded with specimens, Henry slunk back under a heavy downpour of rain, pretending not to realise that he had caused offence. It took the best part of the day to set each of his species in banana leaf. Night had already fallen by the time they edged back round the sheer face of Buarahu. At Manulu homestead, the party was installed in a *luli* hut. It seems that Henry was no longer trusted, for "the sacred weapons were most carefully removed and at the owner's request all our tobacco was excluded" (pp. 476–7). Were they protecting the sacred weapons from devil-may-care Henry, or were they protecting Henry from the sacred weapons, brandished by the invisible hand of a mad spirit? The following day, Henry returned to Samoro, still in one piece.

All the while, Anna had kept in touch with Henry via the coming and going of couriers, but in her letters she had confessed nothing of her difficulties: her fear of being charged by buffalos, the thieves who raided her hut, and the incompetence of her "little woman" caretaker (p. 482). Then, Anna came down with malaria. The old woman communicated using signs that "she would be tabooed by her own people if she stayed by a sick person" (A. Forbes 1991: 294). She "doubtless feared that she might be thought a *swangi* or

disease-producer", Henry would later deduce (Forbes 1989: 484, citing unpublished lines in A. Forbes diary). Only a chicken remained as Anna's "one little companion", while her will to live was only sustained by "the thought of [Henry's] agony should he come in some day and find only what of me the rats had left" (A. Forbes 1991: 286, 297). Anna was eventually ordered back down from the mountainside to the Palace in Dili to convalesce while the governor's secretary sent word to Henry.

Henry Returns to Anna

Henry had set out from Somoro in the early morning of 3 May when the messenger arrived bearing news of Anna's grave illness. Henry quickened his pace, marching all day before alighting from his saddle to spend a comfortable night in some "extemporised grass huts". He was keen to recommence the journey well before dawn. "But [his Timorese] companions refused to travel in the night till the three rajahs in pursuit of the seven maidens" had set, and Rai-Naromak (Venus) had risen some twenty degrees above the horizon" (Forbes 1989: 479). At first light they began to follow the Sumasse River until such a time as it converged with the Lacló River.

On one bank of the Lacló, Henry found the kingdom of Laicor to be a miserable one, ruled by an "opium-besotted individual" with little inclination to attend to the visitors. They crossed the river to the kingdom of Lacló where

for the first time [there were] some signs of state and a more advanced civilisation. I found here a large Catholic church, which on all religious days, I was told, was very well attended. The entire population of the kingdom professed Christianity; and the outward indications of general advancement over their neighbours was apparent; but I cannot say that in individual characteristics I observed much improvement (p. 480).

That Henry failed to notice much difference in "individual characteristics" might have been a sign that the professed Christianity of "the entire population" did not amount to much in practice—an observation made time and again by colonial ethnographers. Nevertheless, Henry praised the missionaries for "their great self-abnegation" and for their tenacity "in seeking out the most discouraging spots of the globe" where "their simple life and fraternal interest in the concerns of the native" exerted "a powerful civilising effect" (p. 480).

From Lacló they approached the precipitous descent to Metinaru. There, they came across "a little mound ... called *matu*, round both sides of which the road diverged". Henry watched each native snap a twig from a tree and lay it on the mound "to ensure a safe descent". Various other articles including cigarette boxes and corn cobs served the same purpose. He recalled having seen something similar in Sumatra, and remembered, citing the *Anthropology* of a man named Waitz, that "a parallel exists at this day in Dauphine, where every passer-by throws into a certain chasm a little stone as an offering to the mountain spirit ...". And "the custom is not unknown in our own country", thought Henry (p. 481).

It was Sunday when Henry reunited with his pallid wife at the Palace. On the first day of June the Forbes couple steamed off for Java. Their fellow passengers were the governor and his family, "woefully altered by sickness" and "fewer by two". Their young daughter had long since been resting in Santa Cruz cemetery and their ten-year old son had recently joined her; both had succumbed to malaria (Forbes 1989: 414; A. Forbes 1991: 229, 301). Bidding a sad farewell to the França family in Batavia, they boarded the mail steamer *Quetta*, "at last homebound". They dropped anchor in Anjer, where they "slept peacefully among its cocoa-nut palms", and a few hours hence they sailed past "the blazing crater of Krakatoa". Finally, on 13 August 1883,

the *Quetta* reached Plymouth, and on the 14th we arrived in London, transported in 75 days from the make-shifts, discomforts, and rough contrivances of a rude hut among half-naked savages, to all the elegances of a great London hotel, with its fashionable crowd, a contrast—to me certainly—too great to be comfortable or pleasant for some time at least. I realised that I was more than half a barbarian, to whom the restraints of civilisation had become irksome, and who would have rejoiced to have been at once spirited back again to his swarthy friends in the Eastern Archipelago (Forbes 1989: 488).

Half-a-barbarian Henry Forbes would return to the Eastern Archipelago within two years, just as his *A Naturalist's Wanderings in the Eastern Archipelago* was published.

3

The Magistrate (An ethnography of aesthetics)

“How shameful it is for us to be so immensely ignorant of our very own colonies,” pronounced the magistrate Alberto Osório de Castro. When he disembarked in Dili one muggy day in January of 1908, Osório had the humiliating words of Reginald C.F. Maugham, from his *Portuguese East Africa* (1906), ringing in his ears: “The Portuguese barely study their populations” (Castro 2004 [1910]: 410). Osório was all too aware that the ethnographic efforts on Timor had been especially meagre. There was not much besides Afonso de Castro’s *As Possessões Portuguezas na Oceania* (1867) [Portuguese Possessions in Oceania (1867)] and Bento da França’s *Timor* (1891) and his *Macau e Os Seus Habitantes: Relações com Timor* [Macau and its Inhabitants: Relations with Timor] (1897). From the English point of view, the restricted, barely ethnographic scope of even those works might have rather proved Maugham’s point.

When Maugham issued his verdict, he would not have cared for the emergence of an idiosyncratic, local ethnography of Timor as the colony underwent dramatic changes—not unlike those occurring in Angola and Mozambique where the Portuguese led military campaigns against the native tribes (Kammen 2015: 97). In Timor, the emulative “pacification campaigns” and the concomitant administrative interventions of Governor Celestino da Silva had been coupled with instructions for military commanders to learn local languages and codify indigenous customs. The idea was that this knowledge be applied as part of an imitative governing strategy where Portuguese officers, ideally, would make decisions (mainly juridical) based on “custom” (Roque 2011, 2012a). The reality was often otherwise,

since Timorese traditions were readily cast aside, and Portuguese ways imposed. Yet, it was in this context of at least partial “imitative governance” that Celestino ushered in a new era of colonial dominance (Davidson 1994: 213–4; Roque 2010b: 303–7). Over his 14-year term in office (1894–1908), Celestino gained military ascendancy over rebel kingdoms; he partitioned the colony into 20 military districts; he banished belligerent kingdom rulers (*liurai*) and secured loyal ones; he appropriated native lands for plantation development; he fixed the territorial boundaries of kingdoms and enforced peace between them; he scrapped the old collective *finta* tax in favour of a territory-wide head tax; he fomented education for the sons of elite native families; he developed roads and communications; and he introduced modern statecraft and more efficient census-taking methods to manage kingdom polities.¹

Ethnographic knowledge played an important role in all of these changes. Yet that ethnography was piecemeal, pragmatic, inconsistently applied and seldom, or belatedly, published in official fora (see Sousa 2014: 36–8). Certainly, micro-governance ethnography bore little connection to broader European developments in ethnography as science. Now, just as the last great monarchy-era governor was about to retire (1908), the same energy that was driving Republicanism in Portugal was also producing a new ethnographic curiosity as well as a new vision for the colonies. A sense of ethical colonial professionalism with a corresponding value placed on scientific knowledge was emerging. The former chief agronomist, Alfredo da Costa e Andrade, had just published his *Distrito Autonomo de Timor* [Autonomous District of Timor] (1907). Agronomist and military commander of Liquiçá, António Leite de Magalhães (1909, 1918, 1920), would soon publish the first of his three main tracts, *Memoria Descritiva dos Recursos Agrícolas da Possessão Portuguesa* [Descriptive Reflection on Agricultural Resources in Portuguese Timor]. And the incoming governor, Eduardo Marques, was about to order military officials and missionaries to collate indigenous legal practices and customs (Pt.: *usos e costumes jurídicos*) (Castro 2004: 409).

From his monograph, *Flores de Coral: Poemas e Impressões da Oceânia Portuguesa* [Coral Flowers: Short Poems and Impressions of Portuguese Oceania], published in Dili in 1910, we can see that Osório was a driving force behind this flurry of ethnographic interest which would see “custom” featured more prominently in colonial policy (Kammen 2015: 108).² His personal motivation is readily understood. As magistrate of the Timor Tribunal, he had to deal with

perplexing legal matters that stemmed directly from the profound gap between colonial and Timorese ways of reasoning and acting. The many mutually unintelligible languages that came before him in the court only befuddled matters further. In a case that was perhaps not so extraordinary in its day, Osório cites that of an accused man who had decapitated a woman:

Having asked the accused why he had cut off the head of a [dead] woman who died in a deserted spot ... while he was robbing her of her two sarongs and a few jewels, but whose death he said he had caused without intention, he answered me that he had decapitated her when he saw his victim mortally wounded. He did so to prevent her spirit from persecuting him, from frightening him, from doing him harm (Castro 2004: 421).

Given situations like this, it should come as no surprise that the magistrate should want nothing more than to understand native law. So, Osório drew on David Kaltbrunner's (2000 [1879]) *Manuel du Voyageur* [Traveller's Handbook] to assemble a questionnaire on indigenous practices, which was dispatched to the districts for military commanders and missionaries to complete (Castro 1996: 87).³

On the practical relationship between ethnography and governance, Osório was conscious of broader European developments. He quoted Arnold van Gennep, the "founding father" of French ethnography and editor of the *Revue des Études Ethnographiques et Sociologiques*:

It cannot be believed that the spirit that motivates all these English ethnographers was the pure love of science. The English were the first to realise the practical reach of ethnography. It contributed to the annexation of the Malay Peninsula ... and serves the governance of India, etc. The equally pragmatic Americans were under no illusions either. One of the first things they did when they occupied the Philippines was to undertake a general census, published in four large volumes, two of which were exclusively ethnographic. After that they established an Ethnography Division in the Home Office (Castro 2004: 409–10).⁴

Osório also knew that the French government had plans to create a Colonial Ethnographic Service while the Dutch equivalent already had "worldwide renown" (Castro 1996: 87). Just in time for Osório to add a note in the corrigendum before *Flores de Coral* went to press, Osório received from Arnold van Gennep "his most enlightening,

most beautiful book, *Religions, mœurs et légendes—essais d'ethnographie et de linguistique*" (1908). By comparison, Osório realised how "weak and vague" his enquiry into "Timorese religion" had been; he saw how "dangerous dilettantism was to ethnography"; and he regretted not having become passionate about ethnography's "world of intellectual wonders" 20 years earlier (Castro 2004: 527).

It is clear that Osório had become deeply interested in ethnography, irrespective of its applications. The magistrate valued the native customs in their own right—as far as a Portuguese colonial could—insisting that the "primitive civilisation of these semi-civilised people deserves not disdain but understanding" (pp. 411–2). Prior to the arrival of the Portuguese Dominican missionaries, he said, the Timorese "had already made or adopted humanity's major inventions". Theirs was a "complete agricultural and pastoral society" with "remarkable artistic expressions"; politically, Timor was "a monarchy, both elective and hereditary". Then, he asked:

Will these semi-civilised peoples end up deciduous branches of the human tree and thus be shed and then perish? Or will they be sources of sap for the future? If evolution is nothing more than a struggle to adapt to an eternally changing environment, would it not be of elementary human prudence to not waste these reserves of human blood? Forgive me Gobineau (p. 411).

If the magistrate was hinting at something like "racial protectionism"—and looking askance at the new scientific racism exemplified by Arthur de Gobineau⁵—his guiding sentiment was one of budding admiration for a people whom colonialism had traditionally diminished.

Osório would find shortcomings in the established view of Timorese religion. He would qualify popular representations of Timorese beliefs, such as that of Delavaud's *Grande Encyclopédie*, which stated that the non-Christian Timorese "follow an animist cult, worship stars and objects, make offerings to the souls of the dead (*matebian*), and revere places that are *pomali* or sacred". The magistrate held that it was not the case that the Timorese worshipped "idols" (p. 418). He identified diverse magical elements in Timorese spirituality: remnants of totemism, a vague shamanism, a hint of naturalism, and animal and plant worship. Timorese beliefs did not fall far short of religion, he said, before quoting from Kaltbrunner's (2000 [1879]) "very useful manual that every Portuguese colonial bureaucrat should have":

From the belief in spirits to the belief in divinities is just a step. In their origins, divinities are nothing but spirits that are more powerful than others. It is often difficult to establish a line of demarcation between spirits and divinities, just as it is difficult to say at what point a belief ceases to be superstition to become religion (Castro 2004: 418, 424).

A novel strand of relativism as well as critical intellectual revisionism therefore visited Osório's thoughts. He was perhaps the first to explain that the missionaries had taken and "Portugalised" the Malay word *pomali* (sacred or sacred house) in the form of *pomal*, and that the indigenous populations of Portuguese Timor, who recognised the word as a Portuguese one, did not employ it themselves (p. 415).⁶ "Objects that are sacred, or with magical properties ... are called *lulik*," he said, as if to correct the ethnographic record. Despite his reliance on interpreters, the magistrate was attentive to the nuances of meaning and translation. Whether, for example, *lulik* signified a property or a relationship was insinuated in the equivocation: "The mountain of Lio-Uàni *has lulik*, or *is lulik*?" (p. 415). If the magistrate's work was too a-theoretical to provide a clear answer, his adroit allusions foreshadowed matters that would be raised half a century later by American and European anthropologists. Indeed, combining literary brilliance, a poetic appreciation of aesthetics and ethnographic perspicacity on themes as diverse as Timor's botany, wildlife, geography, economy, politics, languages and religion, *Flores de Coral* was ahead of its time in 1910, and still so in 1943 when a revised version appeared as *A Ilha Verde e Vermelha de Timor* [The Green and Red Island of Timor] (see Cinatti and Oliveira 1973).

Identity, Catholicism and *Lulik*

If Osório de Castro and Henry Forbes had one thing in common it was their preparedness to admit how they came to their knowledge. Much of the information that comprises the "Timor" entry in *Flores de Coral* (Castro 2004: 407–59) was taken from a young man, Lôi-Hossò, sent by the Department of Public Works to tend the magistrate's garden at his residence in Lahane. Lôi-Hossò, "a Makassae-speaking *Firaco*", hailed from the village (*suco*) of Abu in the kingdom of Viqueque. We should not take for granted the magistrate's ascription of identity: Timor "is a Malay word meaning orient, east", said the magistrate, and "Children of Timor [*Timor Oan*] is the term to refer collectively to the people in our territory"

(pp. 407, 411). In "modern idiom", the magistrate continued, *Firacos* and *Kaládi* (or *Calades*) "are the only collective ethnic terms". The *Firacos*, he said, inhabited the area east of a line drawn between Baucau (on the Banda Sea) and Luca (on the Timor Sea), while the *Kaládi* occupied the other side as far as the western border. The magistrate, therefore, did not draw a strong correlation between language and ethnic group; his gardener, Lôi, was first a Child of Timor, second a *Firaco*, and lastly a youth from the kingdom of Viqueque and the village of Abu. Osório shed no light on how the young Lôi himself would have responded to these ascriptions. The Makassae language was not known to Osório and his Tetum was basic. He mentions at one point that Lôi communicated with him through his "very lively" servant, the son of a Mozambican married to a Timorese. One would assume that the Mozambican's son interpreted back and forth between Lôi's Tetum and the magistrate's Portuguese.

From Lôi, Osório learned that there existed sacred stones (*fátuc-buisolé*), and only old people knew how to distinguish the good stones from the evil ones. Lôi, too, explained that the banyan trees (*hali*) possessed their own *luliks*, manifesting as the figurines of men, women and children. Many people had seen these *luliks* around noon, jumping, dancing and cooking in the shade of the great banyans: "Even Lôi saw them one day when the sun was at its highest, and fortunate were those whom the *luliks* allowed to take away a pot of their cooking, which was full of beads [*múti-salsas*], a source of wealth" (p. 415).⁷

Animals, too, could be *lulik*, Osório learned, considering the possibility that this was "a leftover of totemism". "Like the Javanese, most Timorese consider the crocodile a vessel for the souls of the ancestors, and they call him Avô." He who eats crocodile meat will be devoured by one when he enters the water, reported the magistrate, refusing the label of "superstition". Osório recounted the story of a European who killed a crocodile in a swamp near Dili. The beast was then stuffed by the only man qualified to do so, Dr Belarmino Lobo, then placed in the Municipal Museum in Dili. Many people, "even Christians", came from the surrounding area to bring "the dead monster" offerings of rice and betel (p. 420). In the far east of the island (Lautém), the magistrate understood that crocodiles were hunted and eaten which, he thought, explained why the crocodiles stayed clear of the beaches. Conversely, small cobras called "lords of the land" (Tetum: *rai na'in*; Pt.: *senhores da terra*) were revered

in Lautém but not elsewhere. Lô identified another kind of "lord of the land" (*rai na'in*). Apart from the common little monkey, Lô insisted that another monkey stood one metre in height. Osório was sceptical about their existence: "Lô claims to have seen these big monkeys—at least in his dreams—which, he tells me, cannot be hunted or eaten like the little ones can because they are *lulik*" (p. 420). *Lulik* corresponded to the taboo of Polynesia, Osório suggested, recalling a definition that "taboo was the prohibition to make any use of a certain animate or inanimate object" (p. 495).

Osório enquired after a "cosmogonic explanation of the origins of the world of the phenomena of Nature". But his questions only elicited "a look of smiling surprise, a vague shrug of the shoulders or a few laconic words of indecision" (pp. 420–1). One persistent phenomenon of Nature came in the form of frightening earth tremors. The magistrate's description of the indigenous reaction to tremors was clearly an advance on that of Governor Afonso de Castro (see Chapter One), who called it a "hullabaloo". Osório transcribed and translated their screams as *Amisse! Amisse! Ainda cá estamos! Ainda cá estamos!* [Oy! Oy! We are still here! We are still here!], "an appeal to the spirit ancestors, to whom they attributed the tremors, not to move too much inadvertently" (p. 421).

After one such tremor Lô was unable to shed any light on the matter, but the next day Osório happened to be in Dili where he was offered an interpretation which related to the devastating turn-of-the-century smallpox epidemic. The shaking of the earth was a message from "the king of pockmarks" (Pt.: *rei das bexigas*), who took his orders from Maromak to punish those who deserved it, after which the smallpox would be free to leave (p. 421). Here, Osório found "it easy to discern the influence of Catholic catechism". In this, he was responding to the increasing challenge to unravel Timorese elements from the Catholic ones. Osório first consulted the two dictionaries, both compiled by missionaries—one Portuguese–Tetum of 1889 and the other Portuguese–Galoli of 1905—in which the word Maromak was rendered as God (Deus) and God the Father (Senhor Amo Deus) respectively. Osório then "tried to ascertain to what extent, beyond the influence of catechism, the Timorese held a conception of a supreme divinity".

It seems that Maromak is nothing more than the virtuous *liurai* or *régulo* [little king] of the spirits of the deceased (*matebian*), with whom he resides. I then asked Lô if Maromak was up or down, in the air or underground. He was taken aback by my

question, but after a pause he replied that Maromak was in Dili, in the Municipal Museum. He was referring to the wooden idols that were on display there, perhaps even the stuffed crocodile. I asked him if some wooden figurines of men and women that I had taken from Ataúro were *lulik*, and he said that they were, and that everything that is *lulik* has a soul [Pt.: *alma*] just as people do (p. 422).

The magistrate was left thinking that despite what missionaries had put in their dictionaries, there was not much God or Christianity to be found in the notion of Maromak.

Osório was thus prompted to ask after the marital significance of "being Christian" or "pagan"—marriage being "*cáben* or *hafoli* in Tetum and *barlaque* in the Portuguese of Timor". He noted that "the Christians reserved the words *hafoli* and *barlaque* for pagan marriages". Such unions were composed of "an alliance of wife-givers and wife-takers [*vassau umàne* and *fetòsau umàne*] that commits two kin-groups to successive intermarriage, either endogamous or exogamous". Marriage proceeded "without the intervention of high ritual priests" (*dato lulik*), but nevertheless included "an animist ceremony of ancestor worship". Leading up to the marriage were reciprocal visits and gift-giving between families, during which time "the bride price was adjusted". Finally, the woman was "bought" by the father or head of family "in exchange for buffalos, pigs, gold or silver discs, swords, or for the service of the groom in the house of the father-in-law until such a time as the bride price was paid" (p. 423). The magistrate noted that there was also a kind of "dowry from the bride, consisting of jewels, strings of beads, precious stones and slaves, etcetera". On the day of the wedding, he explained, buffalos and other animals were sacrificed for the banquet and offerings of food were made to the ancestors. Marriage between maternal blood cousins was permitted, but not with the maternal niece (p. 424). Polygamy was "a widespread custom" that Christian Timorese men would conceal by "wedding their first wife, with whom they cohabited, in the Church, while marrying in the pagan way their successive wives", who lived nearby. In sum, concluded the magistrate, "*barlaque* establishes an affinity between the kinship groups of the wedded bride and groom [however] ... this matter needs to be studied more, for none of this is clear, not even to me".

Like every ethnographer, Osório was intrigued by sacred objects and the question of why they became sacred to the Timorese. "A thousand bizarre things that awake in them a feeling of unfamiliarity

or the fear of mysterious malefaction," he surmised, "are religiously stashed away by the Timorese in the sacred houses of their kingdoms." The magistrate had a good friend, a certain Mr Barreto,⁸ who showed him a *lulik* box which contained fragments of 18th-century Portuguese documents; Osório supposed they were the "washed-up debris of some shipwreck". On the same occasion, Mr Barreto gave Osório two *lulik* axes and an unsoldered *lulik* bronze ring "perhaps plundered by a Malay pirate or a Javanese warrior, vanquished thousands of years ago on the Timorese shore". The magistrate sent one axe to Dr Leite de Vasconcelos, the prolific Portuguese ethnographer and founder of the Portuguese National Museum of Archaeology. The other axe was shipped off to Arnold van Gennep in France, alongside several amulets including a crocodile tooth, which had been "kept inside a house for protection against fires, and was worn around the neck to prevent being eaten by crocodiles when crossing the rivers". Superstitiously perhaps, Osório kept the bronze ring for himself and wore it on his finger; it slipped off during a period of illness and was lost (Castro 1996: 123, 2004: 495).

The Red-Haired Race and Indigenous Oaths

Osório de Castro would not be the only ethnographer to engage critically with preceding ethnography, but at times he did so in ways that challenged core assumptions. A notable example arose through his treatment of the "red-haired race". After observing the given role of race in the matter of obvious phenotypical difference (red or blond hair), Osório considered the local understanding of the origins of this "mysterious red-haired race", who lived in the southern kingdom of Bibiçuçu in the village of Aitúha. The group was all the more mystifying because, of all the languages of Timor, they spoke the "curious" one, Lacalei. Osório recalled "Dr Forbes", who wrote:

[M]y eye lighted on an object that riveted my interest more than all else among these savage marketers—a red-haired youth (first one, then a few others), some with straight, some with curly hair, with red eyelashes, blue eyes, and the hair over his body also reddish. I found, on enquiry, that a little colony of them, well known for their peculiar colour of hair and eyes, lived at Aitúha, at no great distance off.

For Forbes, the redheads had been a separate racial "pedigree" (Castro: 2004: 495–6). The magistrate then quoted the "intriguing

information" provided by his "very intelligent friend", the military commander of Manufahi, Lieutenant Francisco Pedro Curado, who during his recent visit to Bibiçu,

did not forget the matter ... of the blond subjects among the population. Indeed, many people there share the typical trait of red hair. They are said to be descendants of an English couple who once lived there. That couple had survived a shipwreck along this coast, and since the coast-dwellers wanted to kill them, they took refuge at Aitúha where they could leave their mixed-blood progeny uninterrupted (Castro 2004: 495; cf. Magalhães 1920: 64).

One of these red, freckled men from Aitúha was summoned to visit the anthropologist Captain Fonseca Cardoso, at which time Osório also had the opportunity to question him. The redhead said that it was not "English blood" that gave his people their hair colour. It was rather the local spirit pair, the Lulik-Sabai.⁹

Osório explained the context of what surely counts as one of the first examples in the Portuguese colonial literature of contrasting a racial account of "phenotypical difference" with one rooted in "custom". Aitúhans, Osório reported, would undertake bride exchange (*fetó-sau-umáne*) with the people of Fáhi-néan and Orílli, and the language of these three villages is the same, namely Lacalei. The Lulik-Sabai lived in a pond inside the base of a cliff. At a certain time of the year, the people of Aitúha would sacrifice a reddish buffalo and a reddish pig to the *luliks* in the pond. This was a *lulik* couple, consisting of the figure of a man and the figure of a woman, both white with blond hair and blue eyes. Like Europeans, the *lulik* man wore shoes and a white coat, and the *lulik* woman was wearing a skirt. During the ceremony, some would see them come out from the cliff. The Aitúhans would leave the coagulated blood of the animals at a huge nearby tree, and then they would dance (*tebedai*) and sing.¹⁰ The water in the pond would rise and fall. It was icy and nobody could drink it, and if leaves fell into it they would jump out again (Castro 2004: 496).

Osório was an advocate for more research on *lulik*: "So many wonderful things will come to light, first through investigations into the indigenous legal practices initiated in every military district by order of the Governor, and later through purely ethnographic research." Indeed, Osório had recently received a postcard from none other than Arnold van Gennep, who confirmed that the initiative of

the governor would advance the discipline of ethnography: "In the 20th century, there will be more and more professorial chairs to deal with the ways of living and thinking of the diverse peoples of the world ... and it is a matter of necessity that people of different races, languages and civilisations develop a peaceful, productive, adaptable and flexible *modus vivendi*" (p. 497). At last Portugal *was* studying its populations, the magistrate must have thought after recalling Maugham's (1906) charge of Portuguese ethnographic complacency; "At last even the missionaries are studying Timor!"

Having just read the missionaries' submissions of indigenous legal customs, Osório could "not resist" quoting from that of the Soibada Mission, signed by Father Manuel Fernandes Ferreira, on "the so beautiful invocation, or *hamulac*, made by the ... ritual priest as he brandished the sacred spear prior to putting on trial the accused":

Oh *lulik* [the Sacred One], the sacred heat, come and see! Oh the sun, the land, come and see!

Oh the three sacred suns, do come down! Oh the three sacred earths do come up.

All of my deceased [ancestors], you whose eyes are like stars and whose eyes are like the moon, watch closely and bear witness.

If in truth I am guilty, if in truth I have stolen, let this water drown me, let this water run out of my mouth; let it run out of my nostrils.

But if I am not guilty, if I have not stolen, the three sacred suns will be my witnesses. The three sacred lands will see my innocence.¹¹

According to the same report, the native of Samoro who

swears before the *lulik* of the kingdom, extends his hand toward the sacred object and repeats this sacramental formula. "O *lulik* Mau-Keu, come and see! Your eyes are like the stars, like the moon. If I stole, if it is true what they say, then let me die walking, then let me die standing!" (Castro 2004: 497)

The principal *luliks* in that region each bore their own name, added the magistrate. He also noted that when the Timorese took an oath they drew a cross on the ground with their finger and ate a little piece of the soil from that cross. In Baucau, he continued, "they offered areca and betel to the domestic *lulik*, and placed some earth on their head so that if they were found lying they would turn to soil". Osório does not tell us anything about how knowledge of this

customary practice may have been applied by the military commanders in their everyday juridical decision-making, as I suppose it sometimes was. Osório, then, hardly ethnographised ethnographic practice as an encounter, but he did accurately predict that “the study of [custom and *lulik*] would be never-ending” (p. 498).

Funeral Rites and Satanic Football

Osório de Castro’s descriptions of funerals—*hakoi mate*—likely drew on the observations of Afonso de Castro and Henry Forbes, accounts that had been handed in by rural officers as well as common knowledge and colonial mythology that circulated the colony. A burial could not proceed until the whole “innumerable” extended family had come together, which “often led to decades-long delays”. In the meantime, the corpse was placed in a coffin (of bark or a hollowed-out tree trunk) set on a bamboo mat with fires blazing on either side. The corpse continued to rot in a hut built for that specific purpose next to the family dwelling (p. 438). The magistrate learned that among the Galoli speakers the widow of the dead man sang this lament: “Méha, méha, aut méha, Babassa rom!” (Pt.: *Sozinha sozinha, coitada, como a folha da babassa!*; Alone, alone, I am wretched, like a babassu leaf.) It was probably Lôi who proffered the information that the people of Viqueque had an “ingenuous and puerile” chant called *Aildlan* or *Sid*, in which “the word *tániss*, cry, [was] drawn out in a melopoeia” (pp. 438–9). It was reportedly sung by the eldest relative and repeated by all in chorus:

Ānan kiec natarrei
Tániss!
Nabar natarrei
Tániss!¹²

Some would “break out in shouts, saying they wish to go with the deceased” (p. 439). Money was placed in the mouth of the deceased, and “utensils and cloth, useful in the next life, were also put in the coffin” (p. 439). “It is clear,” wrote the magistrate, that “the life of spirits is a reflection of the life of men.” Unlike in Christianity, there was “no divine punishment or prize”. “A slave, a pauper or a rich man in this life, is a slave, a pauper or a rich man in the next” (pp. 421, 439). Osório might have called this “hierarchical animism”, had he thought of it.

The magistrate observed that the deceased were buried next to the family's dwelling, "sometimes right at the front door". (He doubted the veracity of a report stating that the dead of Ataúro were buried in a vertical position.) "Even the Christians," said the magistrate, "bury their dead newborn right at the front door, if not inside the house." In some places, coffins were suspended in the treetops. No one was spared a ceremonial funeral.

On the day of the burial, all the pigs, buffalos and goats of the house are slaughtered, so that the souls of the animals may accompany their owner. The horse of the deceased also follows the cortège (*Lóba, Líuco*), entirely wrapped up in pieces of cloth which will be thrown into the grave ... It is believed that the soul of the deceased goes mounted on his horse, and even as he rides the animal neighs (p. 439).

There was another way to die and be dead in Timor, and given the frequency of internecine warfare, it was hardly less common. "The Timorese adore war," said the magistrate. "Like the Dayaks and other Indonesians, they have the age-old custom of decapitating their dead or wounded enemies in battle" (p. 435). But if this was disturbing enough for those who imagined they were on a civilising mission, the ensuing ritual—what acclaimed ethnographer Alfredo da Costa e Andrade (1907: 9) had referred to as Satanic Football—was said to be "terrifying" and "lugubrious":

In the dance of victory (*tebedai*), during the macabre and satanic song of the *loroçá*¹³ (alternating between just two notes, noted Dr Gomes da Silva in his opus *Em Timor*), the warriors and women of the victorious village or kingdom kick the dead heads making them roll and bounce, while the dancers clown about, spinning and leaping, howling and grimacing (Castro 2004: 435).

Osório never beheld such a "head feast" with his own eyes, but his friend, the Chief of Health Services of Timor, Dr Morais Palha, witnessed one such "macabre dance", telling Osório that even the heads of women and children had been booted hither and thither. (Later, Osório mentions that it was not customary to cut the heads off women and children—p. 437.) The magistrate also consulted his gardener on the matter. It turned out that throughout his childhood Lôi had not only seen many enemy heads roll, but he had also helped to drain their brains through the occipital cavity and then dry them over a smoking fire (p. 436). Lôi enthusiastically described the care

one must take with an enemy's head for "its eyes bulged and its mouth was still open, poised to bite" (p. 436). (Is that why Lôi was missing a finger?)

Lôi proved light on detail, so the magistrate turned to his friend Mr Barreto. Years earlier, in a kingdom of the north coast, Mr Barreto had witnessed the arrival of a band of victorious troops. According to him, the warriors (*açuáim*) who cut the heads were responsible for emptying their brain, removing the tongue and combing their hair every day. Until such a time as the raids were over, they would keep the heads clean by regularly smoking them over a fire. At meal times, they would roast their corn over the same fire, and eating that corn "seasoned by the juices of the heads" stood as evidence of the warriors' courage (p. 437). Mr Barreto added that when the troops came home the heads were set down in a line in front of the Catholic Church. The ritual priest (*dato lulik*) then appeared to reprimand "the glazy-eyed dead" for the offences they had inflicted on the kingdom ruler (*liurai*) while they were alive. After the due recriminations, he gave each head an almighty kick. Then, Mr Barreto reported, a woman from the conquering kingdom came forward, gesticulating wildly and cursing fervently. Loosening her sarong, she picked up the heads one at a time, letting each one slide down between her body and the cloth, kicking them away as they fell on the ground at her feet.¹⁴ Then the warriors went to the sacred tree to deposit the skulls, singing an enigmatic and archaic quatrain as they went.¹⁵ "It will be difficult to extirpate this primitive custom," lamented the magistrate as if he could see into the near future (p. 436).

Now, however, would seem a good moment to consider the relationship between colonial discourse (including the scripted "disgust" and "moral recoil" that characterised ethnographic treatments of head feasts). For this, we only need to go back some 15 years to the start of the pacification campaigns, instigated by Governor Celestino da Silva following his arrival in 1894. These were a series of attacks on enemy or non-compliant kingdoms, particularly concentrated in the western part of the territory. Large armies consisting of men from loyal kingdoms were sent into battle, commanded by a handful of Portuguese military officers. Even if the main strategy was to raze entire villages, usually by fire and sometimes with bombardment from the sea, this approach did not exclude Timorese headhunting (Kammen 2015: 91–2; Roque 2010a). Some of these offensives would have been invisible to the Portuguese commanders who tended to remain a safe distance from the battlefields. However,

the victorious warriors came back to camp bearing the booty of war (including slaves for Celestino's new plantation estates) as well as decapitated heads. Officially, the governor's orders were that military men must "not sanction the horrible and barbarous head feasts" (Silva 1898: 106). Unofficially, the Portuguese were at least exposed to the rituals, and were probably drawn to participate. We do not know how many Portuguese actually gave heads the boot—one suspects that they were eagerly invited to play Satanic Football, and did so, perhaps reluctantly or, more likely, in drunken pleasure. Either way, the distinction between the civilised and the non-civilised became blurred—a blur that was not sufficiently poetic to warrant mention in *Flores de Coral*.

Journey to the Coffee Region

Osório did not travel extensively in Timor (and certainly not without his sacred bronze ring to protect him). In fact, his journey to the famous—but soon to be infamous¹⁶—private plantation complex known as the Sociedade Agrícola Pátria e Trabalho (SAPT) was his one major journey. Undertaken with the governor, Eduardo Marques, and the director of Public Works, Lieutenant Alberto Carlos, among others, their mission was to determine whether the newly created state plantation of Cai-tôco-lôa (near the Pahata plantation) was apt for conversion to an agricultural experimental station.¹⁷ They set off in cavalcade on 14 April 1909, with a military attaché.

Having departed Lahane before dawn, the governor, the director of Public Works, and the magistrate dismounted in Aipêlo. The magistrate looked at his watch; the trip had taken ten hours and ten minutes. They ate a late lunch "in the beautiful fortified house" of the military commander. (Osório did not comment on the ill-reputed Aipêlo prison.) Then the governor's entourage rode on for a few more hours to Liquiçá, where they were met by a cortège consisting of more than 300 Timorese horsemen, led by the district military commander and ethnographer Lieutenant António Leite de Magalhães (1909, 1918, 1920).

The magistrate was impressed by the official gala reception, by the modern feel of the town, by the Chinese businessmen who served champagne in a carpeted pavilion adorned with flowers, and by a large palm plantation that was the property of a relative of the ex-governor. But what he found most striking was the *benjamina* opposite the Municipal Palace. It was the largest he had ever seen.

This banyan tree is a botanical wonder. I will never forget that evening, all lit up with Japanese lanterns with little multi-coloured ceramic bowls from Minho [the north-west of Portugal] with tiny oranges in the Coimbra style fashioned from colocynth halves, with the *tebedai* undulating in the twilight of the thousand trunks of the sacred tree, reverberating with lights with the metallic thundering of the gongs and the syncopated rhythm of the tambourines, the men crowned with rooster feathers, half-naked and bronze-skinned, leaping and shouting in high-pitched shrieks. Behind the men were women wearing dark sarongs, hieratically silent and stiff, swaying gently along in small regular steps, one after another in two rows, uninterrupted the whole night long like somnambulists playing primitive instruments. It was once again the tree of war trophies [human skulls], consecrations, magical imprecations and oracles, murmuring with the whispers of the souls and inhabited by the mystery of all the obscure, religious dreaming of this race (Castro 2004: 471).

At dawn on 17 April, the government party headed for Maubara, and after spending one night there they turned inland from the coast, riding up through eucalyptus and acacia stands, rice fields and coconut plantations. The travelling magistrate marvelled at the brachycephalic Asian race of their surefooted Timorese horses (brought from Java to the Sunda Islands by the Malays centuries earlier) that carried them up the very rough, "near-vertical path" to the small village of Bábi-Quénia at 700 metres altitude (p. 472). After a repose at a government rest-house, they continued on up to the peak of Guguléur (1,060 metres) and the village of the same name with its military post dating back to 1894 (Kammen 1915: 98).

"His Excellency the Governor" requested to visit "the temple of the *lulik* objects or the taboos of the village", whereupon "the courteous *dato* allowed them entry among the astonished but smiling women" (Castro 2004: 473). The house was "all smoky due to the ritual fires that frequently took place inside". The visitors filed inside.

The *dato's* lantern illuminated the staves of *liurai* with the arms and emblems of the Dutch East India Company, a bronze box-drum with the lion of the Netherlands and a company motto, and an elephant's tusk blackened by smoke, small iron idols perhaps one hand-span in height, two Chinese terracotta pots, one depicting a hen and the other a dragon, various tattered and unrecognisable vestments and two tall decorated wooden drums, surrounded by loose figurines made from sticks ... and other ancient, sooty, nameless objects.

The sacred objects were taken outside and photographed by a certain Lieutenant Silveira Machado. Beside the sacred house, the magistrate took note of a stone altar and a post "for depositing the horns and bones of the sacrificed animals" (pp. 473-4). A "trophy-tree" (banyan) grew nearby with its human craniums conspicuously shining white.

Osório noted that this spot commanded a magnificent view in all directions. Reflecting the precise geographical knowledge of the times, Osório gazed out over the white, sandy plain of Loes; behind that, the pyramidal Mount Atabai (975 metres) rose above the fog, and on the horizon stood the proud "Dutch peak" of Fialaran; around to the south was Mount Cailaco, Mount Ramelau ("at 2,950 metres, the highest peak in the territory"), and Darulau (2,322 metres). They lunched in the refreshing shade of Daro-Lêma, a coffee plantation once the property of Chinese but since forcibly taken over by the SAPT. The cavalcade then returned to Maubara, where in the late afternoon they visited the "pretty church ... and the school, attended by the sons of the local native rulers, lovingly managed by the Vicar Manuel Ferreira, a truly modern-day missionary" (p. 474).

From there, the cavalcade headed for the plantations of Cai-tôco-lôa, consisting of 8,000 coffee and 5,000 cacao bushes. An hour-and-a-half's ride beyond that, they encountered a "cool and elegant residence" with "modern furnishings". From the college, 50 children—"boys and girls that had been saved from the pacification wars or had been born on the plantation"—lined up to greet the governor. One girl caught the magistrate's eye. She was

blonde, with blue-green eyes, a fair complexion, and looked just like a Dutch-Timorese *mestiça*. She must be about 12 or 13 years old. She doesn't know the name of her father or mother. The attention we lavished on her made her uncomfortable. Perhaps it was due to a touch of the instinctual pride of a white made to live in native conditions (p. 478).

In contrast to the "first-rate domestic installations", the magistrate felt discouraged by the enormous coffee plantation of Pahata. Afflicted by leaf rust, it was "not worth much" (p. 479).

On 20 April the governor's company moved on, descending to the plantation of Banitur of the Sociedade Perseverança—another of Governor Celestino da Silva's creations. They precariously followed the bank of the raging Lau-Uélli River. Having found a place to cross it, they arrived at the extensive cacao plantation of Oilêu (part of the SAPT complex), where 500 Timorese horsemen and the military

commander of Hatolia, Sub-lieutenant Valente, gave them an official welcome. The cacao bushes were thriving, yet the plantation was not in full production as it should have been after eight years (p. 481).

Then they visited another plantation—the Sociedade Agrícola Comercial e Industrial de Timor—whose “large territory was teeming with natives from the vast and populous military district of Hatolia” (p. 482). They were greeted by the old *dato lulik*—who Osório thought of as “the sorcerer of the kingdom”. (Although kingdoms often had a principal ritual centre, I am not sure that the office of “sorcerer of the kingdom” existed as such.) The old *dato lulik*, flanked by women dancers, declared deferentially: “We are not of the sun nor of the land, but of the governor. Before we refused to work, nor did we know how to. But now we have been taught, and we do want to work” (p. 482). At the time, of course, the magistrate knew nothing about reading against the grain of colonial discourse. Yet, no doubt he was wise to the possibility that natives imitated the Portuguese to please them. Notwithstanding the “noise” of the *tebedai* (that did not let up until daybreak) “each slept as best he could” before the early ascent to Fatubesse, “the most important of the European plantations in Timor” (also part of the SAPT) (p. 483). The coffee was in its “perfect habitat for an introduced plant”, thriving under the canopy of an immense forest. The magistrate observed that what the civet cat achieved here through the ingestion, digestion and excretion of coffee berries was the same as in Java. However, for all the glory and productivity of the plantation, he did not feel as well here as he had in Angola, and he wondered about the suitability of Timor for white settlement.

Despite the altitude I did not sense the delightful, luminous lightness and unspoiled transparency of the airs of Lubango or Jumpata on the high plain of Moçâmedes. Will the European be able to acclimatise to the high altitudes of Timor, as he is likely to do in the high plains of Africa, perhaps? I believe not, but I hope I am wrong (p. 484).

The magistrate offered many reflections and regrets on the prevalence of disease in Timor, the wanting characteristics of the inhabitants and the conspicuous lack of Portuguese blood to be found among the people (pp. 486–7). He offered no reflections, however, on the reputedly slave-like conditions under which Timorese worked on the plantations (see Davidson 1994: 97; Zola 1911).

On 22 April, the cavalcade departed at the break of day. After following a difficult and steep pathway through a forest of the native *Eucalyptus alba*, they rode into Uргуиço, the capital of the kingdom of Ermera (Castro 2004: 487). Before them lay the immense lands of the near-bankrupt Companhia de Timor. Osório echoed the optimism of Magalhães (1909) on the prospects for labour in general. Even if Timor were destined never to be a settler colony, "the problem of indigenous labour would be easily resolved" given "the excess of manpower" and the "new docility" of the people. The magistrate explained that the military campaigns of the ex-governor had persuaded "the poor, unarmed, almost infantile and, *I hope*, definitively pacified Timorese ... of the futility of resistance" [emphasis added]. "And now," Osório gushed, "the natives have been turning up to the plantations of their own accord asking for work, and it is remarkable how easy has been the collection of the head tax in its first year" (p. 492). Osório suspected that only "an unjust action on the part of the authorities" or "the self-seeking plot of some adventurer" could incite revolt among the Timorese population at this point in time (p. 492). Nevertheless, if he believed that peace would hold, within two short years he would be proven more wrong than anyone would have dared to imagine at the time; this, of course, would come as the War of Manufahi (1911–12).

That night, as they dined "in the salubrious airs of Ermera" under the clear light of lanterns—lanterns whose fuel had been brought in bamboo receptacles from the bubbling natural oil wells of Laclubar—, chatting about the titillating question of fraternal polyandry, thoughts of native restlessness were a world away (p. 493). Early the next morning, on 23 April, the governor and his retinue left Uргуиço. They hastened down through the gorges and between the boulders in the Gleno River to Tibar, and then on to Dili, arriving just in time to receive a group of high functionaries on an official visit from the neighbouring colony (p. 499). It is not clear what their mission was about, but one suspects that the magistrate was more anxious to discuss his recent experiences with his gardener than to fraternise with Dutchmen.

4

The Captain

(An ethnography of change)

José Simões Martinho arrived in Portuguese Timor in 1909. First a lieutenant and later a captain, he was destined to become one of the longest serving military officials in Timor. Over the course of his service he would see ten governors and just as many interim governors come and go. He also became one the most prolific ethnographers of his time. His ethnography—his particular way of knowing the Timorese people—was tied to his vocation. Captain Martinho did not see Timor through the eyes of 19th-century governors who regarded it from a certain distance and with limited knowledge of and control over the colony; nor through the eyes of a 19th-century wandering botanist, who, intent on collecting specimens, documented the “peculiar customs” that he stumbled upon along one specific journey; nor through the eyes of an early 20th-century Dili magistrate, whose preoccupations were more poetic than pragmatic. The captain, rather, saw Timor through the eyes of a military authority who sought to govern the Timorese from day to day, intervening in routine activities and managing mundane situations.

Each of the military districts and their respective subdivisions (Pt.: *postos*) had been granted jurisdiction over defence, political, economic and administrative functions.¹ The military commanders were the district representatives for customs, public works, postal services, justice, finance, civil registry and so on. They saw to the peace between the indigenous polities, the delineation of boundaries, the resolution of conflicts, the punishment of crimes, the building of infrastructure, the maintenance of health, the collection of taxes, the recruitment of indigenous labour and the registration of births,

deaths and marriages. Inevitably, administrative interventions came to bear on the indigenous "customs" (Pt.: *usos e costumes*) and specific animist practices in a way that would have been inconceivable in the previous century.

The reader will recall that in 1908 Governor Marques had commissioned military commanders and missionaries to document indigenous legal customs; the same call would be repeated in 1926 by a later governor. However, the captain regretted that

no serious attempt was ever made to codify customs, and as a result many commanders faced difficulties in the resolution of petty disputes between kingdoms, villages and families; to be just, these resolutions needed to be based on a respect for tradition, the basis of harmony in the indigenous society (Martinho 1943: 264).

In the absence of formal measures, commanders relied on a certain practical ethnographic sensibility in the execution of their duties. This sensibility was lacking in most cases. The majority of commanders were too rough, uneducated or uninterested. Military officials, moreover, like most governors, did not wish to stay longer than necessary on an island that was, quite fairly, reputed to be a cemetery for Europeans. Time was insufficient to learn local languages and comprehend indigenous ways. A minority, however, stood out. Besides Martinho, two other notable examples were António Leite de Magalhães and Júlio Lencastre. Of the three, Martinho was exceptional, for when he finally gave up his position as the head of Suro (now Ainaro) and sailed home in 1935, he had lived a quarter of a century in Timor. His protracted service, his intimate familiarity with the people across a number of districts, his knowledge of local languages and the steady accumulation of experiences lent his first major monograph the distinction it has. *Timor: Quatro Séculos de Colonização Portuguesa* [Timor: Four Centuries of Portuguese Colonisation], published in 1943, won that year's prize for colonial literature; a second book, *Problemas Administrativos de Colonização da Província de Timor* [Administrative Problems in the Colonisation of Timor Province], published in 1945, proposed a sweeping post-war development model.

Both works reflect Martinho's one-quarter century living in Timor. Few others were qualified to offer assessments based on such depth of personal experience of how, for example, the climate had

changed (the rainy season had become shorter and more torrential) and deforestation had accelerated (p. 113). Martinho's monographs also reflect a new mobility that was a product of the times. Besides the fact that the captain's office spanned a number of areas (including Maubara, Liquiçá, Oecusse and Suro), the last decade of his service coincided with the rise of motor transport and road expansion that would eventually reach every military post in the territory. For this reason, Martinho was able to put to rest the longstanding presumption on the existence of volcanoes or "Afonso's crater" (p. 108; see also Lencastre 1931a: 38). The captain also described the mineral and oil wealth of the country from the perspective of someone who had investigated the reserves and was able to distinguish fact from fiction (Martinho 1945: 108–11). Moreover, his etymological, semantic and toponymic insights into local languages and his broad treatment of indigenous "customs"—from family life, dwellings and sickness to agriculture and industry—were among the most sophisticated to date.

More than most, the captain was attentive to the historical differences between the many language groups:

Is it the case that the customs and religious beliefs of the people are, or were, the same across all of Timor? Would their social organisation, the power of the chiefs, the administration of justice ... and the very idea of justice have had equal value and significance over the long course of history and amongst all the people? Not at all. We still find divergences from one region to the next, most of all in the area of Timorese religion and customs (Martinho 1943: 260).

Indeed, Martinho's ethnography had more historical depth than any preceding work, since it encompassed the history of phenomena that appeared to be exclusively Timorese and those that had arisen, disappeared or been modified through colonialism. Martinho's diachronic observations, his synchronic treatment of customs as well as his understanding of the ethnolinguistic groups were not left unacknowledged internationally. Martinho's *Timor* (1943) informed the first serious treatment of Portuguese Timor's indigenous society to figure in an English-language journal: Sydney academic Arthur Capell's "Peoples and languages of Timor", published in *Oceania* in 1944, came at a time when Australia became acutely interested in the kind of place Japanese-occupied Timor was, and whether the eastern half would ever be "*Portuguese Timor*" again.²

Martinho in History

If Alberto Osório de Castro had given Timorese customs a poetics, Martinho gave them a history. That history was, of course, one that was unique to the era: the commander experienced the birth of Republicanism in Timor (1910), the War of Manufahi (1911–12), the long peace that ensued amongst the indigenous kingdoms, the coming of dictatorship in Portugal (1926 onward) and its far-reaching repercussions in Timor, and the conclusion to the transition from military to civil administration in 1934. His biography was intimately connected to this fast-changing Timor. He entered Timor early enough to witness what was often taken to be the demise of the native aristocracy (the *dato* class), with the source of its power—the indigenous land tax known as *rai teen*—already abolished. After the War of Manufahi, he saw how some kingdom *liurai* (rulers) had their power distributed among hundreds of loyal *suco* chiefs, many of whom were “lesser nobility” of the pre-existing *dato* lineages; he also saw how a minority of chiefs would evolve into an elite group of “capital L” Liurai (see Felgas 1956: 152; Gunn 1999: 189, 246; Kammen 2017: 135).³ And by the time Martinho left the colony, the kingdoms and their attendant organisation of property were but a memory (Martinho 1943: 265). Finally, the captain was able to state:

The entire Timorese social organisation in relation to property is now completely cleared up. All the privileges of the chiefs were outlawed and tradition is extinct to the point that only the old men can recall it. Thirty years were sufficient for a new understanding on the prerogative of the state as the only land-owner to be cemented in the mentality of the Timorese (p. 152).

Martinho may have overlooked complexities surrounding the transformation of old *dato* lineages and the exact composition of the new Liurai. Nevertheless, he turned Timorese history into an object of study in a way that it had never been before, by recognising this as a history that was forging an altogether new path on account of expanding colonial dominance, warfare and pacification, shifting demographics, migrations and language use. “It is urgent,” said Martinho, emphasising in situ ethno-historical research over traditional colonial history,

to undertake detailed study in *Timor* on matters of the past. The Timorese dialects, which tell us so many interesting things about

the people who speak them, offer us this opportunity, although they are at risk of disappearing given the invasion of Tetum. This dialect, which we call official, was almost unheard of in most parts *thirty years ago*, and now it is heard from one end of the colony to the other, introduced by missionaries, authorities, interpreters and the very indigenous people who stem from the Tetum-speaking regions (p. 266) [emphasis added].

But if the “thirty years” of definitive transformation echoes throughout the captain’s narrative, there was one crucial pivot point in this historical shift: the War of Manufahi. The momentous historical significance of what were Martinho’s first two years in Timor constituted a critical frame of historico-ethnographic reference.

It is therefore pertinent to ask when, exactly, the young lieutenant came to Timor. Only in passing does Martinho indicate he was already on the island in 1909.⁴ But it is not until October 1910 that Martinho dramatically asserts a narrative presence. This was the time when rumour of the proclamation of the Republic of Portugal had reached Timor, but whose governor hesitated to announce it prior to confirmation.⁵ After weeks of uncertainty, the Republic was finally made official on 28 October, and:

After that, in November if I remember correctly, an old Dutchman, apparently educated and honest, disembarked in Dili ... to make a study of the colony ... I received him at the border of my military post, and accompanied him in his excursion to the kingdom of Maubara. He climbed to the highest point of the kingdom, the native village of Gugulêur, at 1,200 metres, to visit the old sacred house [*uma lulik*], where some old Malay documents stored there filled him with pleasure. He jumped for joy at the sight of some ancient staves that the Dutch East India Company had given to a native ruler [*liurai*] at the time when Maubara was under the dominion of the Dutch. From this high vantage point, he jotted down in his notebook the various pathways that led toward the border. On the way back to the fort, he walked cross-country, and at the palisade he checked his notes. But the moment he asked to inspect our armaments, I began to distrust him (p. 43).

The Dutchman was the well-known Indologist, G.P. Rouffaer (Hägerdal 2012: 344; Kammen 2015: 33, 188–9n38). His visit to the same Gugulêur that Alberto Osório de Castro and the ex-governor Eduardo Marques had visited one and a half years earlier was, for

Martinho, but a pretext to obtain information: ever wary of the Dutch, Martinho did not find it coincidental that Dutch forces had amassed at the border.

Martinho goes on to impart another tale of Dutch spying that occurred in April 1911, this time in the form of two Dutch "geologists" who entered the Portuguese colony at Balibó (Martinho 1943: 45). More intrigues followed, then a military "incident" between the Dutch and the Portuguese, and so on and so forth. If initially it is not clear where Martinho is heading with the chain of suspicious happenings, it soon becomes apparent that in his view the Dutch were taking advantage of tentative Republicanism to destabilise the Portuguese colony. In fact, Martinho was intent on asserting his contribution to the much-debated causes of the War of Manufahi.⁶ The Dutch, stated the captain, succeeded in sowing the seed of revolt by giving "excessive confidence to kingdoms, principally of the central region, which were preparing against the Portuguese" (p. 55). What began in the southern township of Same on Christmas Eve, 1911, when Liurai Dom Boaventura's rebels chopped off the head of the local military commander (among others) to the tune of "the sinister war cry of the *loroçá*", quickly escalated into the War of Manufahi (p. 57). The scale of this "revolt"—a term perhaps employed to downplay the huge number of casualties as well as the many kingdoms drawn into the conflict—was unprecedented. Martinho recounted the main events of the war, but told nothing of what part he played in it.

October 1912 marked the beginning of a truly pacified Portuguese Timor. It was therefore the point at which military commanders, such as Martinho, returned their attention to peacetime endeavours. In every military commander's case, this encompassed developing a distinctive style of commander-ethnographic knowledge that was oriented towards changing the people and the land to align with Portuguese goals. The captain was unique among the commanders for combining this drive for change with an analysis, often ethnographic, of its inherent challenges. Admitted the captain: "It is not easy to change a people who, since the most remote times, have lived by their customs, which make up their essence and which consist of immutable laws, transmitted from generation to generation" (p. 117). As we will see, even if the Timorese customs were resistant to change, military commanders pressed change upon them, especially if it meant boosting profits.

The Agricultural Revolution and the Apparent Repression of the Sacred Realm

The early years of Martinho's time in Timor coincided with the governorship of Filomeno da Câmara, which ran from 1911 to 1917. While this governor had achieved notoriety for skilfully leading the Republicans in Timor to victory, his peacetime achievements were no less remarkable. As soon as order had been restored, Câmara envisaged that Timor would be transformed into a plantation colony that would rival the best of the African possessions. So, he executed an Agricultural Revolution that would go well beyond Governor Celestino da Silva's initiatives, which had been limited to establishing large European-owned plantations. Câmara founded the Department for the Promotion of Agriculture and Commerce (*Repartição do Fomento Agrícola e Comercial*) and its bimonthly Bulletin (*Boletim de Comercio, Agricultura e Fomento da Provincia de Timor*). He imported many new crop varieties and agricultural hardware (including hundreds of ploughs). He set up the government's second major farm, the *Granja Republica*, on the vanquished lands of Manufahi, thus opening up the southern region to exploitation. He devised and imposed a form of collective ownership of property, and instituted over a thousand communal plantations for the most lucrative crops, particularly coffee and coconut, but also staple food crops such as maize and rice (Shepherd 2014; Shepherd and Palmer 2015).

Military commanders who presided over the districts, such as the young Martinho, were charged with implementing the communal plantations according to the logic of "forced cultivation" (Pt.: *cultura forçada*) whose inspiration, as part of the 19th-century Cultivation System, had initially come from the Dutch experience in Java. They had nurseries built, lands cleared and communal properties registered. The commanders regularly visited the widely distributed communal plantations on horseback (trips that in their day could take weeks). The intensity, pace and scale of the Agricultural Revolution from 1914 to 1917 earned it the reputation of a "planting fury" (Duarte 1944: 88–9). By the time Câmara left the colony in 1917, it was said that 12 million coffee seedlings and half a million coconut palms had been put into the ground (BdCAeF 1917(1): 82; Lencastre 1929: 47). Câmara's governorship "marked the most brilliant epoch in the agricultural development of the colony", Martinho exclaimed (1943: 88).

There was an important *lulik* dimension to the planting fury. Wrote the commander:

Timor boasts magnificent forests. At the time of her discovery, they must have been dense, but even today there are clear signs of their old grandeur. In the middle of bare and arid land ... rises up a flourishing patch of forest with rich soils. Under the forest canopy, coffee grows magnificently. The Timorese understand these places as *lulik* since they offer the wandering spirits a refuge. So we reap the benefit of this belief, ordering the exploitation of these lands for cultivation, which the profound animism of the native does not permit (p. 112).

Military commanders as a whole were well aware of the fact that *lulik* lands were inhabited by ancestral spirits, which they called the *luliks* (Pt.: *os lulics*). In 1917, the commander of Manatuto reported that "between Feue Rim and Mane Hat, we are moving further into the forest of Clidne, which from our point of view is *lulik* in as much as it is extensive and will take a long time to fill with coffee" (BdCAeF 1917(3): 274). The same commander discovered yet another forest further to the south, called Maha-Cuac, which "the people of Soibada have left alone due to the presence of a great *lulik*". "With our characteristic disregard for matters relating to the realm of the sacred," the commander crowed, "we gave the order to transplant into it as quickly as possible the coffee seedlings from the nursery." Mockery might best describe the tone in which he states: "With the blessing of the good 'lulik', who has always been so kind to us, we hope the coffee will thrive better there" (BdCAeF 1917(3): 274). A survey of the literature reveals a distinct pattern to the way indigenous Timorese dealt retrospectively or "hyper-animistically" with such incursions onto *lulik* ground; they embarked on what the Portuguese would call a fury of sacrifices to placate the retributive spirits. For example, in Bobonaro, one military official obliged the natives to plant coffee in a *lulik* forest and coconut where *lulik* forbade digging. After that, the wet-season rains failed and so they made many sacrifices to compensate for what they believed was a consequence of their transgression (BdCAeF 1915(6): 664; see also McWilliam, Palmer and Shepherd 2014: 7).

In his major publications, Martinho avoided retelling the jokes about *lulik* that went around the colony—jokes whose humour pivoted on the silliness of animistic notions of causality, the irony of "when superstition came true" or assertions to the effect that the

"good *luliks*" could help the Portuguese realise their objectives. But to be matter-of-fact was to be dismissive when Timorese superstition was measured against colonial truth. For the captain, the Timorese had "impressionable souls" and their "most distressing inheritance" was "the power and influence of the ancestor spirits" on their lives. This was a people whose "fear dissolves their intellect" and who "fret obsessively over how the spirits can perturb and even annihilate their happiness at whim" (Martinho 1943: 255–6).

If the reader has the impression that natives were simply ordered to clear their *lulik* land for cash crops, a classic piece of testimony on the subject presents a more nuanced picture with particular reference to ritual or "pagan ceremony".⁷ Júlio Lencastre, who spent 12 years in Timor, initially as the military commander of Lautém, narrated the dealings of Governor Câmara with one of the wealthiest "capital L" Liurai in all Portuguese Timor, Dom Francisco of Ossú in the southeast of the country (Lencastre 1931a: 19–21).

The occasion was the visit of the governor to the military district of Viqueque. As he crossed the formidable frontier mountain to Ossú, he gave it the colourful name of Mundo Perdido. It was indeed a lost world, an extremely fertile region but, until then, unproductive, like the *Lost World* of Conan Doyle, enveloped in mystery and mist, and so impenetrable that Europeans could not get near it.

There, in one of the darkest recesses of tangled ravines and dense forest stood the *lulik* or *pomali* [sacred] houses, where that fetishistic and bellicose people so rooted in their superstitions kept their cherished idols, trophies and relics. Only the ritual priests [*nai luliks*]⁸—the priests entrusted to guard the *pomali*—could enter that area.

At the time of the first visit of the governor to those sacred forests, an important ritual [*estilo*] was performed. Under the enormous canopy of the lush, centuries-old trees that shaded the most important sacred house [*pomali*], all the *liurai*, chiefs, ritual priests and elders [*katuas*] of the region assembled. They prepared a ritual, but it was not a ritual for war ... It was a ritual to decide that these ancient *lulik* forests were no longer *lulik*: the anthem that echoed across the island from mountain to mountain had arrived to those mysterious regions. *Let those forests be cleared so they can be filled with coffee.*

They would go on to make a communal plantation that would include everybody—the chiefs and the people. The spirit of distrust [of the chiefs] that led the natives to leave land

uncultivated had come to an end. The registration of indigenous property with the delivery of a property title [Pt.: *alvará de propiedade*] had, quite simply, achieved this goal.

But they wanted to pay homage to the authority who, through his prestige, had succeeded in initiating this new era of fruitful work. They decided to offer the governor their most precious idol, the most sacred relic of their ancestors. It was a fantastic flintlock rifle whose barrel measured two and a half metres, the most prestigious relic that had been carefully stored inside the most important sacred house.

They undertook the ritual and all the necessary ceremonies to break the *lulik*, and these were a great success. And then Liurai Dom Francisco of Ossú, surrounded by his retinue of chiefs, priests and elders and accompanied by the majestic *tebedai* and *batuque* dancers, solemnly approached the governor to offer him that relic, their most precious idol, pronouncing these words: "Lord and Master [*Amo* and *Senhor*], we, the Timorese, no longer need weapons because never again will we make war. We only need our arms to work. Your Excellency, accept as our pledge of peace this sacred gift of our forebears."

"I don't know what greater homage natives could pay to the authorities that rule them," wrote the nostalgic Lencastre many years later. "Every circumstance and detail of this ceremony were so deeply engraved in our memory that when we relive those joyful times of work, in which we modestly participated, it all comes back to our minds as vividly as if it were yesterday." Lencastre then draws the lesson from the experience:

To appreciate the true meaning of this homage, it is necessary to understand the psychology of the Timorese people and know how deeply attached they are to their customs, so that we can then proceed to properly measure the value of the transformation executed in their traditional practices through the instruction of well-chosen and well-oriented authorities (Lencastre 1931a: 19–21).

The de-*lulik*-isation of land served as Lencastre's example of how a careful modification of customs should, ideally, proceed. Implicit in his brilliant testimony, however, lies the way the local Timorese authorities dealt with colonial and spiritual powers at once; offerings (for example, animals) were made to the spirits to de-sacralise the land or at least to calm the land spirit(s), just as an offering was made to Governor Câmara—not just any offering, but the most sacred item available—"no greater homage" was the very item that

had always been at the heart of ritual ceremony, one that transmitted ritual power and one that was, as a weapon, symbolic of power. The indigenous authorities, it would appear, projected their animism onto the new situation at hand, placating both their spirits and their "colonial oppressors" at once. The Portuguese were as much a part of the ritual ceremony as were the spirits, and both represented danger and opportunity in this transformative animism that evinced a distinctly political dimension.

While most communal plantations intended to benefit commoners failed (Carvalho 1937), the opportunities of the plantation economy for indigenous elites cannot be overstated.⁸ Only 12 years after the forest of Mundo Perdido had been turned over to coffee and four years after the completion of the road linking the north to the south coast, the administrator of Baucau, Armando Pinto Correia, drove to Ossú where he encountered the *liurai*, Dom Francisco, "already old, limping with rheumatism, incapable of riding a horse", yet "a man so lively in spirit, who in the following year acquired a Chevrolet automobile for his personal use, and a truck for the transport of goods to and from the region" (Correia 1944: 130). Dom Francisco was one of a select group of *liurai* who prospered through what appears to be, at first sight, simply his privileged relationship to the Portuguese.⁹ Yet it could be argued that he was fundamentally prospering through a particular kind of transformed animism: an animism that reached out for the material rewards of the coffee trade by making a double-deal with spirits on the one hand and Portuguese on the other. Whether Dom Francisco personally really believed in or cared about *lulik* is unknown. (I suppose that a residue of superstition sufficed to make sure *lulik* potencies were properly accounted for.)

For their predominantly naturalistic ontology, ethnographers such as Martinho and Lencastre were prevented from understanding themselves as part of—or homologous to—the transforming animistic structure in what, I would argue, manifested in a conflation of ceremony and ritual. Their naturalism, in other words, prevented them from placing on the same analytical plain the "illusory" relationship the Timorese had with "invisible" spirits (as exemplified in ritual) and the "real" material relationship prevailing between themselves and Timorese (as exemplified in ceremony). In respect to the clearing of sacred land, it eventually became a moot point. The ever-pragmatic Martinho observed that history could not repeat itself indefinitely, for by the time Governor Teófilo Duarte imposed his own "planting

fury" in 1927 and 1928, few if any of those virgin, let alone sacred, forests remained (Martinho 1945: 155). For plantation development, Duarte had to settle for the degraded lands that, for years, had served as the swiddens of what were known as poor products—the less profitable crops of maize, dry rice, cassava and so on (Shepherd and Palmer 2015).

Intervention into Burials and the Question of Resettlement

The question of burials had long been a policy issue for reasons that touched on productive efficiency, hygiene, Christianity and rationality. Martinho's treatment of burials (*hakoi mate*) brought ethnography and governance into a single frame of reference. In the year of his arrival in 1909, the commander witnessed dead bodies as "long-time companions" sharing the household with the living—the corpses had been there for half a century or more.

Not even death removes them definitively from the earth and from the house where they have lived. Wrapped up in cloth, placed in the trunk of a tree crudely hollowed out and covered over with rough-cut planks, the corpses were placed next to the fireplace where they slowly mummified. When the dead were sent to the grave they were mourned by many who had never had occasion to meet them in life (Martinho 1945: 250).

Martinho explained the animistic logic behind the custom: only proper ceremonial burial could guarantee that the soul of the deceased would find peace and prevent it from haunting and terrorising the living. Until the family and relatives could afford to carry out the funerary ceremony (*estilo*) "with all its pomp and expenses", it was postponed. In the meantime the corpse would be kept safely inside the home (Martinho 1943: 235, 1945: 250).

Persons of low rank received no burial ritual, while "in primitive times" burials for *liurai* were complicated and "even tragic".

Dominated by the idea that the soul embarks on a new existence in which material needs apply after death as they do in life, the Timorese would not allow a *liurai* to be buried without sending someone to serve him. His faithful servant was consigned to keep him company in the same grave. On the day of the burial, this servant rode around the village on the *liurai*'s favourite horse to enjoy his last day of existence (Martinho 1943: 237).

For years, said the captain, the military fought for the termination of these customs. Law was passed stipulating that a death had to be reported immediately to the local military authorities and that the burial had to be carried out within 24 hours. But other modes of persuasion were also evidently employed. The memory of smallpox, for example, filled the Timorese with such trepidation that "the authorities took advantage of their fear, convincing them that their dead kinsmen rotting inside their impoverished dwellings year after year were the cause of the disease" (Martinho 1945: 229). For their part, ritual priests came up with a solution that modified the custom. They agreed to immediate burials and, from then on, "the corpses would be honoured by the sacrifice of a buffalo or two, saving the main ceremony for later". In that later ceremony, "the mat and the cushions on which the deceased [had been] laid to rest continued to be ceremonially honoured as if they were the deceased body itself" (Martinho 1943: 236).

Clearly, *some* Timorese at least were ready to negotiate animistic practice with the Portuguese. The grand ceremonies continued to be undertaken years or decades after the burial, albeit without the corpse. In these, Martinho observed that certain procedures had to be followed:

On the first day of the festivities, a special spot is prepared with the best cushions and mats in the house of the family of the deceased so that the honoured [deceased] may attend the funeral sacrifices. At some point, one of the relatives leads a saddled horse by the reins to the grave, in the vicinity of which, according to their superstitious belief, the soul of the deceased wanders about. The natives imagine that they "see" this soul in material form. The horse is then led to the village, accompanied by the entourage (p. 236).

If the long delay of the burial was the first problem of burials to be addressed by the local authorities, the second problem was the number of livestock killed. The burial rites, said the captain, constituted "the principle menace afflicting livestock wealth" for "a hundred buffalos and dozens of pigs and goats were slaughtered in ceremonies that went on for weeks". Only a person stationed in rural areas for many years could have noticed that the problem was becoming more serious. Martinho saw a growing annual migration of buffalos and horses from the eastern kingdoms coming in to the central kingdoms. Martinho remarked how the coffee-induced agricultural wealth had

increased demand for profligate burial rites. Undertaken to "honour the dead", the rites "resembled a hecatomb of thousands of animals" (Martinho 1936: 6). Coffee wealth, therefore, had made hierarchical animism even more hierarchical, while the Portuguese endeavoured to ameliorate this unintended consequence of plantation development. So, the government created the burial tax to limit the numbers of animals slaughtered (Martinho 1943: 236n1). The progressive levy ranged from five to ten *patacas* (Mexican dollars) according to the number of beasts sacrificed. Martinho and the other commanders were responsible for the collection of the tax whose goal was to restrict "the butchering of thousands of pigs, goats and buffalo that were lost every year from the rich plains of Timor" (Martinho 1945: 108-10).

Martinho maintained that the tax was a success in places of lesser agricultural wealth, but in richer coffee-producing areas it did not exert a sufficient disincentive: "Coffee-producers could easily afford the tax and a hundred buffalo would still be slaughtered for a person of high rank" (p. 110). "Self-seeking chiefs," moreover, "concealed the number of animals slain by carrying out the slaughter clandestinely." Such chiefs were the rule rather than the exception, Martinho complained (p. 108). The government tried to modify the situation by increasing license fees for rituals and applying penalties to those who hid their animals. But, Martinho continued, "the Timorese population can only be wrested from this evil tradition by Christianising them" (Martinho 1936: 7). He proposed it would be more effective to place a cap on the total number of animals sacrificed until such a time as "the Timorese are integrated into our civilisation" and "the souls of the dead no longer serve as the cause or pretext for funeral ceremonies" (Martinho 1945: 110).

The Portuguese were also frustrated by traditional burial practices because they complicated prospects for the resettlement of natives. The idea of taking dispersed villagers and resettling them in concentrated settlements (Pt.: *aldeamentos* or *aldeias indígenas*) had long teased the colonial imagination. Governor Celestino da Silva (1894-1908) had taken villagers off their ancestral lands in the western kingdoms and regrouped them elsewhere (Duarte 1930: 93), and in 1927-28 Governor Teófilo Duarte took steps to establish "symmetrical villages" in the eastern part of the colony—steps that the Administrator of Baucau, Armando Pinto Correia, had adamantly opposed (Correia 1944: 348-9; Felgas 1956: 283-4; Martinho 1943: 185). Martinho does not tell us of any personal experiences he had of resettlement

while in Timor, but once back in Portugal after his long service overseas, he put forward a comprehensive plan by postulating an extensive administrative re-arrangement to make districts conform to the territories of the language groups. In Martinho's mind, new indigenous settlements would comprise mission-based schools, facilities for agricultural education and medical clinics. The villages would boast a large square—the "centre, lungs and life of Timorese joyfulness"—for singing, dancing, games and ceremonies. As for the dwellings, families would not all sleep in the one room but would be divided among separate bedrooms, thus "dissolving the habit of promiscuity" and "lifting their moral standards" (Martinho 1945: 257).¹⁰

Martinho was experienced enough to know that the concentration of people into new settlements would not happen just by passing laws. First, "a thorough overhaul of the mentality of the Timorese masses must be undertaken" (p. 260). Part of this would involve a colonial project of disenchantment. Martinho appreciated that "the dead kept the Timorese fixated on their village" and that "because of these dead, the village was not abandoned easily" (p. 250). To achieve "our ends", Martinho insisted, it would be necessary "to tolerate some Timorese preconceptions, one of which is of the old ritual that demands the evil spirits be exorcised—spirits who might otherwise bother the inhabitants in their new dwellings" (p. 260).

Underlying the question of proposed benefits to the indigenous population was of course the perennial issue of Christianisation. The captain was conscious of how easily Catholic precepts could be inculcated among the indigenous children while inside the Catholic Missions. Yet,

nothing is more fragile than the new beliefs of these neophytes. Back in their traditional villages, Christians take part in pagan rites. They sacrifice animals in honour of the dead, they evoke the beneficent spirits, and they run to the traditional healer [*matan dook*] with their illnesses. They are slaves to their ancestral beliefs (p. 196).

Matters of Christianisation and matters of governance were inseparable. Dispersed communities posed difficulties for the execution of the annual census, the recruitment of labour, the control of vice and the everyday discipline needed to make the people grow cash crops for export. Dispersion afforded them the freedom to circumvent the authorities and avoid taxes. The captain admitted this much:

The Timorese, whose passive resistance we know all too well, always find a way to elude our authority; they register themselves in their old villages, in obeisance to their chiefs, and although they have their houses there, they live with their family in the fields or anywhere except in their home village (p. 261).

We may assume that the captain had experienced every possible permutation on the Timorese “art of *not* being governed” (Scott 2009). The social engineering of a new urban-like rural landscape was in his estimation the best answer for a colonial power that had always struggled to control such a rebellious race. Martinho’s vision was never implemented, although Governor Álvaro da Fontoura instituted some resettlements in the central districts just prior to the Japanese invasion (Martinho 1945: 258).

The Marriage Tax

Another matter touched on the governance of customs, specifically, a policy disagreement between Martinho and his contemporary, Lencastre, about a marriage tax commonly referred to as the polygamy tax. Osório de Castro (2004: 424) had noted that polygamy was “a widespread custom”. Magalhães (1920: 55) might have wanted to correct that misconception when he wrote that “polygamy does not exist as the right of the man, but rather as a concession offered to the man by the first wife”, and that “the census of 1915 indicates just how uncommon this concession is”: 75,055 males, Magalhães noted, were married to 78,117 women (a total of 3,062 “extra wives”).

The tax on polygamy needs to be seen in view of the general proliferation of tax types. Apart from the head tax, which had been rising steadily since its first general collection in 1908, a raft of other taxes had been devised (Gunn 1999: 183). The marriage (*barlaque*) tax was one of many. Structurally, this tax was similar to the burial tax insofar as it taxed an indigenous custom. The marital tax was first proposed on the grounds that every Timorese man should pay tax according to his means. Explained Lencastre:

The Timorese native is polygamous. His first expression of wealth is to have more than one wife, and therefore, more than one house; many have two wives, and some have as many as seven. [I proposed to the government council in 1924] that each man pay the tax as many times as the number of wives he has. The proposal was approved and it squared with the indigenous

mentality perfectly. Some Timorese proudly paid the tax seven times over (Lencastre 1929: 37).

What Lencastre justified on account of equity and indigenous psychology, Martinho opposed on account of custom, economic benefits and the post-war demand for population growth. "What reasons did the legislator have to apply yet another tax on the indigenous population that openly ran counter to their customs?" objected Martinho.

Could it be that by such measures the legislator wanted to give moral instruction to the Timorese, making it more difficult to maintain polygamous households? Perhaps. But I believe that this was not the way to go about it. It is not immoral to have more than one wife in light of the Timorese people's observance of tradition ... The marriage tax brings little benefit. In terms of morality, it achieves little because men who live according to the laws of nature do not violate their moral principles by having more than one wife. In terms of economics, given the devastation of wars, epidemics and slavery, the growth of the population is more important than a few thousand *patacas* [Mexican dollars] put into the state coffers (Martinho 1945: 107).

Martinho thought that the imposition of the marriage tax did nothing to modify Timorese marital values. "The Timorese household cannot be Christianised so quickly," argued the captain. "First and foremost it is necessary to reform the Timorese spirit and mould his character" (p. 107).

On the basis of new census data, Duarte (1930: 127) indicated in 1930 that in all Portuguese Timor there were 4,681 men with two wives, 231 men with three, 38 with four, eight with five, three with six and just one with seven (see also Felgas 1956: 164); thus 5,307 extra wives. These figures, if trustworthy, point to 2,245 more "extra wives", or an increase of around 70 per cent in polygamy over little more than one decade. Just as Martinho had noted that growing coffee wealth had produced a demand for ever greater numbers of animals to be slaughtered at funerals, something similar may have been going on with polygamy: following Lencastre's own logic, the more wealthy some central uplanders became from coffee, the more wives (and children) they could afford. The Catholic missions, meanwhile, were doing their best to rid the society of polygamy by annulling these pagan marriages. (We revisit this topic in Chapter Six.)

The Scourge of the *Matan Dook* Healers

Sickness and curing disease was another area of colonial intervention into traditions and customs. Martinho held that the *matan dook* healer was "a skilful charlatan who manages to eat, dress and enjoy himself at the expense of his gullible patients, and even to save up a nest-egg for old age" (Martinho 1943: 253; see also Correia 1934: 291). These healers convinced their victims that ill-health was caused by the "evil eye" (Pt.: *mau olhado*) of sorcerers (Tetum: *buan* or *suang*; Pt.: *feiticeiros*), who were "eaters of souls" (Pt.: *comedores de almas*). The captain was persuaded that the *matan dook* healer "never cured anybody".

What if, for example, the patient complained of a backache? First, everybody would have to withdraw from the scene to enable the *matan dook* to find the cause of the sickness. The patient would be subject to a gentle massage, accompanied by enigmatic hissing and whistling. Then, at a certain point, the scoundrel would let out an "Aha!" of surprise and glee. From the patient's back he would pretend to produce a rusty nail or a shard of glass that the evil spirits or the sorcerer had inserted into the body of the victim while he slept.

Martinho added a comparable example of how *matan dook* healers plied their trade in the fields.

What if the plants in the rice paddy were stunted or blighted by rust? The owners would not have to worry because the *matan dook* would solve the problem. He would enter the garden, do some spins, and then he would suddenly stop. Fixing his attention on a particular spot and getting down on all fours, he would start to dig frantically. His face radiant, he would hold up the cause of the evil—a piece of iron—which he would then give to the owner, saying, "There you go, this is the work of the enemy who placed this metal here in your absence" (Martinho 1943: 254).

Martinho would not excuse this as harmless Timorese quackery. The victims were not only those who were diddled by the *matan dook*, but also those who were accused of sorcery. The indicted were often "harmless poor devils" whose families were similarly indicted. Asked the captain rhetorically: "How many people accused of being sorcerers, yet warned in time, left all their belongings behind to save their

skin by fleeing to other kingdoms where they changed their names!" The *matan dook* were more than charlatans. They formed "gangs of dangerous evil-doers" and pursuing them was a duty, averred the captain. "After years of work, this scourge had become almost extinct in the colony" (p. 253).

Martinho evaded the topic of how he and other commanders went after the *matan dook* and what punishments they dealt to them. Nor does Martinho tell us what protections were offered to the accused sorcerers. However, the Administrator of Baucau, Armando Pinto Correia (1934: 320n2), noted that at a time when "the devastation of sorcery had greatly increased", one of his predecessors "defended so-called sorcerers from reprisals by grouping them in a separate settlement in the deserted lands of the Aubaca plateau".

However much some Timorese may have questioned sorcery, there was clearly resistance from the native population to colonial intervention into the animistic understandings of disease aetiology and medical treatment. In the face of devastating epidemics such as dysentery and smallpox (which decimated entire villages at times), the captain said, people did not seek a solution in "our science, which they had still not accepted". Rather, they were drawn by their naive belief in hidden enemies to seek the help of the *matan dook* "to placate the evil spirits". In doing so they went so far as to "hide the sick from the authorities" (Martinho 1945: 229). "Is it not difficult," he asked, "to make a people whose belief in the origin of disease is based on an idea of evil spirits, accept the kind of efficient medical assistance in the way we expect them to? It certainly is!"

At the time of Martinho's arrival in Timor there were only three doctors and a few nurses to attend to 450,000 indigenous inhabitants spread over 18,000 square kilometres (p. 231). After 1914, medical assistance "became more effective". Medical personnel began to travel to districts and "the treatment and cure of ulcers and swellings, from which thousands of Timorese suffered ... produced a revolution in the mentality of the native". The "empirical science of the *matan dook* began to wane", the captain claimed enthusiastically. By 1925, he went on, over 50 medical staff including pharmacists, indigenous nurses, midwives, trainees and helpers served the sick. Accordingly, "little by little the natives abandoned their *matan dook* ... and their trade ceased to be lucrative". "Eventually," the captain predicted, "the existence of these healers will be but a memory of a long-lost tradition" (p. 234). The captain's story was of course a common one: the rationality of science, by its very truth and efficacy,

would prove its worth over superstition. Although the *matan dook* did not really disappear as Martinho anticipated, we can be certain that they did disappear fast when officials like Martinho were in the vicinity.

Sacred Things, Sacred Land and the Destruction of Forests

Not everything was about repressing, taxing, prohibiting and modifying customs. Some of the captain's ethnography possessed a more abstract quality. He resisted, for instance, documenting his entry into sacred houses and listing the objects he found there. He was rather more interested in pointing to animistic reasoning:

Ancestor souls disaffected by the absence of religious ceremony made in their favour constitute the evil spirits that can lurk anywhere, awaiting the opportunity to impose punishment and sickness. From this belief is born the sentiment of veneration that the Timorese hold for the objects that belonged to the dead, objects that are carefully stored in the sacred house when their previous owners were of high standing.

The captain thus saw the sacred house as "a temple" and, true to his style, he did not describe what sacred items one or another sacred house contained, but rather concentrated on genres. First, he pointed to an "indigenous class" of objects.

In the sacred houses are stored the most diverse objects, such as old war and ceremonial drums, warrior katanas [long-blade knives], staves of former *liurai*, old uniforms, swords, rifles, spears, jewellery, cloths, crockery and even the antlers of animals that were sacrificed to honour the souls of those to whom they belonged (Martinho 1943: 257).

The captain identified a second class of foreign, mainly European, objects, indicating not only that they were sacred but also the degree to which they were sacred and why they had become so sacred. Expressive of the commander-ethnographer's marked diachronic tendency is his use of the past tense in the following paragraph:

The primitive sacred house also used to contain objects employed by Europeans. There were uniforms, swords and helmets that had belonged to white people—treacherously killed in the early revolts against our presence or else killed in combat—and all

those things were worth the same degree of religious respect as their own ancestors, because they represented chapters in their history (p. 257).

For the captain, the sacred house was therefore not only "a temple that revealed religious sentiment" but also "the history of the Timorese people". And because it contained enemy objects, it also contained

the precise narrative of their wars, and it was with these that the ritual priest, on the eve of new wars, came to carry out his ceremonies, consulting the entrails of the animals and marking the warriors' forehead with a mixture of betel, lime and areca, who according to his naive understanding would become invincible.

As such, Martinho gave simple expression to the Timorese relationship concerning the significance of the past for the present. What Martinho evidently neglected to consider was the homologous *lulik* status of both the *luli*-fied things of prominent but dead Timorese ancestors and the *luli*-fied things of prominent foreigners—hierarchical transformative animism in other words.

Yet, Martinho understood that he was immersed in a rapidly changing Timor in which *lulik* presences and potencies were undergoing great change.

In the ceremonies of today there no longer appear sacred vessels or utensils as such, although I recall hearing references to ancient utensils of Chinese porcelain ... which were highly valued and were deemed worthy of *pomali*, such as in the old house [*uma lulik*] of Camenassa, where they used to keep Chinese earthenware, which was only brought out for the major ceremonies. It is said that during the revolt of 1911–12 the Timorese troops went in the house and smashed to smithereens beautiful Chinese porcelain whose existence went back centuries.

In some sacred houses porcelain vessels were still used for offerings. These were "the property of the kingdoms", and were "deployed by the ritual priest to receive the blood of the victims of sacrifice on those occasions where some important event in the life of the people was expected" (pp. 259–60, 260n1).

Martinho occasionally failed to find explanations. Noting that there were Timorese who felt "a repugnance for certain foods", he asked some people why they did not eat pork. Not receiving an answer that satisfied him, he put their repugnance down to "instinct".

However, he found that “a couple of people justified themselves by saying that their father or grandfather did not eat pork and added, in a hushed voice, that it was said to be *lulik*, and therefore prohibited” (p. 164). The captain also observed that pregnant women did not consume kid but he was unable to elicit an explanation. In some regions, he saw that some pregnant women put aside their needlework to avoid making knots which “in their disingenuous understanding could cause the umbilical cord to atrophy”. It is clear that Martinho did not engage with European ethnology as the magistrate Osório de Castro had done; and for this reason, comparative ethnography with Polynesia and elsewhere was out of his range. (In fact, it seems to me that the Catholic clergy exerted a considerable influence on Martinho’s ideas, as we will see in Chapter Six.)

Martinho bluntly reported on how foolish the Timorese could be. The captain described a certain *ai-bânir*, a “huge bee tree, valued for the swarms that make wax in it”, which “in the olden days was a great source of wealth for the island” (p. 124). Along the length of the high branches were rows of honeycombs and, the captain observed, many a native would pay with his life attempting to get at it. When access was too precarious, the people built huge fires underneath the trees to smoke out the bees, after which the nests were knocked off with long sticks. In the process, they “destroy everything” and “in the following year the tree has no bees nests at all”. The natives then resorted to their rituals, which they performed next to the trunk as an emergency appeal to the “good spirits”; in this, “the native demonstrates yet again that he is the enemy of the forest” (p. 125). Indeed, the destruction of the forests was a major source of colonial concern and Martinho would reiterate time and again that the Timorese figured as “the major enemy”. In this respect, the limited ascription of *lulik* had failed the Timorese for “the forests which were not considered *lulik* [were the ones which they] chopped down with their katanas and axes, burning them and reducing them to ashes, giving them a few years of crops before incurring the inevitable exhaustion of the land” (p. 112).

This brings us to a twist in the ethnographic representation of *lulik* land, for behind the high-profile plantation economy lay a tremendous—but less touted—effort on the part of the colonial authorities to extend the maize frontier. While this produced an abundance of maize to feed troops and plantation workers, it had the unintended effect of accelerating environmental degradation (Shepherd and Palmer 2015). In accounting for that degradation,

Martinho and others routinely overlooked the rapid expansion of the plantation sector, putting the full blame on the destructive "traditional agriculture". Rarely in the colonial literature does one find anything that contradicts this orthodoxy. The following, therefore, presents an interesting exception:

The commanders were ordered to pressure the natives to increase the subsistence crops [mainly maize] by increasing the area under cultivation ... But they exaggerated so much in the fulfilling of their instructions that under this policy of maize expansion instituted in 1912, the destruction of forests reached unprecedented levels. The disappearance of those subtle principles on which the Timorese population based their social order led them to the conviction that the *luliks* in the forest did not exist. This contributed greatly to the devastation of many forest areas, which until then had been preserved on account of their trepidation and religious preconceptions (Agência Geral das Colônias 1931: 115).

For all his excellent insights, Martinho never appreciated this point for it went against a fundamental tenet of the Portuguese "civilising mission" that the captain refused to question: Timor's traditions caused problems, the Portuguese rectified them.

On 13 June 1935, Martinho made one last ascent of Tata-Mai-Lau (Mt. Ramelau), after which he left the colony of Timor (Martinho 1943: 104). In the final stages of World War II when Japan still occupied Timor, Martinho wrote: "It has been years since I have been in Timor, but neither time nor distance prevents me from feeling for her people as intensely as when I served there then; and now I am feeling her tragedy with equal intensity" (Martinho 1945: 7). Martinho would never return to Timor, but in a sense he revisited with his reformist work *Problemas Administrativos de Colonização da Província de Timor* (1945). If his proposal to have the administrative boundaries conform to ethnolinguistic ones was subsequently ignored in re-occupied Portuguese Timor, the spirit of intervention was not: "Transforming the Timorese people will require tens of years, possibly centuries, of education" and "we will have to make them conscious of our mission and lead them to accept its truths" (p. 117). Nobody at the time would have guessed that the Portuguese had only 30 years left in Timor.

5

The Administrator (An ethnography of purity)

The young military official, Captain Armando Pinto Correia, disembarked in Dili in June 1928. Correia was soon appointed Administrator of Baucau, a position which he would hold until 1934. The appointment was special: Baucau was the largest, most prestigious district, and among the first to be converted from a military district to a civil one. Over six years, Correia would gain the reputation of being an exceptional administrator. What was not perhaps fully appreciated to begin with were his unique ethnographic skills. Correia responded with a vengeance to Governor Duarte's exhortation to document indigenous customs (Pt.: *usos e costumes*). The foreword to Correia's first monograph, *Gentio de Timor* [Pagans of Timor], states that while the administrator built up and organised Baucau, he "explored the natives' customs, their souls and their mentality, for to understand them was to lead them effectively, mould them and put them to good use" (Correia 1934: 9). *Gentio de Timor* places Correia's administrative flair in the context of his ethnographic mastery. In 1935, the book won first prize in the Portuguese National Competition for Colonial Literature; prominent French anthropologist, Arnold van Gennep, considered it a "descriptive monograph that deserves to be ranked among the best in the world" (cited in Foneseca 2012: 3).

Gentio de Timor marked a shift in Portuguese ethnography. It presented a comprehensive study of Timorese ritual life in Baucau district by an accomplished administrator who, it would appear, acquired considerable knowledge of the local language, Makassae. Part One of the book consists of nearly 200 pages of descriptions of Makassae birth, marriage and death rites, marital exchange relations,

healing practices, myths and legends, inheritances and property relations, the indigenous political system and so on. As such, *Gentio de Timor* was the first major ethnographic work to concentrate on the "customs" of a particular Timorese language group. He was also the first ethnographer of the period to depart from the hitherto common use of *lulik* (sacred), substituting that for *faluno*, the Makassae equivalent.

Gentio de Timor was also an interregional study that encompassed most of the main language groups. In Part Two, Correia attempted an ambitious, comparative description of, for instance, practices associated with birth, marriage and death. For this, he relied on 14 reports of "Timorese customs" issued mainly by Portuguese military commanders.¹ Although Correia judged most of these reports to be "deficient in terms of their brevity", he deemed it "necessary to extract from these words all the contributions for the clarification of ethnography on Timor" (Correia 1934: 205n1).

Correia built on the work of other ethnographers, but also found fault with their ideas. He detected errors in Afonso de Castro's (1867: 323) dismissal of Timorese polygamy as concubinage, and his view of marriage as a "simple contract". He chided Bento da França for repeating Castro's mistakes and for "holding himself to the descriptions of that former governor throughout his entire work" (Correia 1934: 223n1, 224n2). He disputed Osório de Castro's claim that "the people of Ataúro used to extract the newborn by caesarean, accomplished with a spear by the husband at the first sign of his wife's labour since "nobody remembers it now and it does not correspond to Timorese psychology" (p. 209). In his second, posthumously published monograph, *Timor de Lés a Lés* [From One End of Timor to the Other], Correia objected to how Osório de Castro failed to indicate where he had recorded the ritual chant of the *loroçá*; nor did his translation deserve much confidence because it was "too lax, based on verse that Osório himself declared 'almost incomprehensible'" (Correia 1944: 51n1, 56n2).

The source of Correia's authority to revise the ethnographic record is easily understood. The administrator occupied a more favourable time and place for learning about Timorese ways than his predecessors had done. As a rural administrator in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Correia developed closer and more personal ties to the Timorese than Afonso de Castro could have done in the 1860s, Bento da França in the 1880s and even Osório de Castro in the first decade of the 20th century; all of these men had resided in Dili,

had not experienced an entirely "pacified Timor" and had, at best, limited access to the hinterlands.

With each passing year after the turn of the century there was evermore integration between the Portuguese and the indigenous authorities. By the time Correia took up his post, administrators, provisioned with vehicular transport, could travel further and faster. In practice, integration meant that Correia and his six subordinate sub-district administrators (five army corporals and one *mestiço* civil servant) worked closely with the Timorese on a daily basis. Stated Correia on their role:

One moment he is an agronomist, a common judge, a police chief or a criminal investigator; the next moment he is a road surveyor, a receptionist, a salesman, or an electrician; after that he will act as a carpenter, handling the spirit level or the folding ruler; the next day he will be a census-taker, an employee of the tax office, a public revenue accountant as well as an issuer of transit licences for the natives and the Chinese, and for the livestock and the ships; and, finally, he will be a nurse or a school inspector! (Correia 1934: 51)

All of these functions, of course, entailed a broad range of interactions.

Since the varied professional roles of administrators in the civil districts applied equally to military commanders in their counterpart military districts, there is not much to separate Correia the administrator from Martinho the military commander.² Indeed, both commander and administrator eventually became "contemporaries" on the island since the final quarter of Martinho's protracted service overlapped with Correia's six-year service. It is therefore not surprising that Martinho and Correia both tackled the question of the dramatic changes to indigenous society since pacification, of which the disintegration—and perhaps the reintegration—of the aristocracy class (*datos*), the disappearance of the indigenous kingdoms (*reinos*) and progressive Christianisation were construed in terms of the "Portugalisation of Timor" and the dilution of Timorese customs. In light of these changes and the attendant ethnographic yearning to separate "the Portuguese" from "the Timorese", each of them was drawn to construct an image of Timorese purity. While the commander found his version of a "pure Timor" back in the past—generally a nominal "30 years ago" of which he was well qualified to speak from personal experience—the administrator went to great lengths to distil that purity in a synchronic present. A footnote reads:

I have tried to portray the Timorese people such as they are, authentically, *pur sang*, without intellectual miscegenation. There is not a single custom registered, a scene recorded or a ceremony or legend described, that has not in all its details been winnowed through a rigorous sieve in accordance with my strict criteria to cast aside anything that is not deeply and truly Timorese and devoid of the deformations or contagious influences of Europe (p. 133n1).

Correia was therefore more committed than was Martinho to ethnographic purity through an essentialist construct of Timorese customs. And to exhibit his credentials as an ethnographer of the "real Timor", he divulged more about his sources and methods than did the captain. After listing the many chiefs and indigenous functionaries he consulted, Correia explained in one note:

In Timor it is necessary to distrust the solitary accounts of native employees, servants and civilised natives, with their intellects and sensibilities adulterated by Europeanism, and minds that mix half-digested ideas and feelings when overhearing the conversations of bosses, the meetings of convicts or the teachings of missionaries, or even through foraging through metropolitan gazettes ... There have been many cases of Portuguese officials who, after living in the abased intellectual community of Dili for six months, spend a few more months in the interior, where they naively accept the words of any old Jesuit servant or one or another dodgy foreman that they chance upon and construe as traditional, not realising that their vernacular, myths and legends are suspiciously similar to our own Catholic doctrines or the fairy tales we tell to our children. In Timor, these pleasurable indulgences are one matter, but it is quite another matter when the gullible victims return to Europe to espouse their picturesque misrepresentations (p. 133n1).

Thanks to Correia's "winnowing out of European influences" through his careful choice of informants, the customs he described attained a singular "authenticity". For him, the category of "religious ceremonies" (Pt.: *estilos*) was pre-eminent among the customs because they epitomised the "real Timor". "The entire lives of Timorese," he stated, were "permeated with religious ceremonies, managed by the 'pagan priest', whose knowledge of magic put the natives in the most secure and intimate contact with the supernatural realm" (p. 88). If we draw a distinction between the casual commentary of Timorese

religious rituals on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the more systematic, field-based description thereof, Correia might qualify as the first Portuguese ethnographer of Timorese rituals. Chapter Fourteen of *Gentio de Timor* was without question the most dense and heavily descriptive elaboration of Timorese rituals ever undertaken: the maize ceremony, the sowing ritual, the harvest ritual, the ritual of the new maize, the inauguration of the sacred house, the ritual for the habitation of a dwelling and the rain ritual.

Despite his complaints about Osório de Castro's failure to indicate where he had heard his version of the war chant (*loroçá*), Correia was no less vague about when and where he attended these rituals. But by no means would Correia allow his readers to assume that the acquisition of information had been straightforward. He singled out a category of rites (referred to as *barare*) that were "the most secret and least known by Europeans".³ "As for the rest," the administrator continued,

there is no people like the Timorese to hide away their customs, in particular their religious practices. The natives of this colony are serious and reserved, and do not permit their mockery ... and if some white person should tease them, they immediately withdraw, their pride hurt. Strongly superstitious, they recoil at the irreverence of the European who, violating the secrecy of their cultish practices [Pt.: *práticas cultuais*], will provoke the irascible sacred land spirits. Thus the Timorese keep themselves hermetically sealed, defending themselves from profanities. Only after a number of years of contact and much mutual respect, as in my case, is trust established and, little by little, imperceptibly, they disclose something of their mysterious ways to an outside authority, mysteries of which the majority of bureaucrats filing through the colony remain ignorant (pp. 87–8).

Correia was right to highlight the ignorance and irreverence of many Europeans in Timor, and his claim that he gradually won the trust of the Timorese through developing a respectful rapport might be taken at face value, more or less (as we will see below).

Correia's presentation of each of the aforementioned rituals was structurally identical: they were chronologically ordered; they were narrated in present tense; their point of departure in most cases corresponded to a significant point or event in the agricultural cycle; there were substantial transcriptions of Makassae ritual speech, accompanied by word-by-word Portuguese translations in the footnotes; the

descriptions were without theory; particular villages or people's names were not identified; the observer's presence was rendered invisible; and the accounts were neutral, neither mocking superstition nor attributing cultural or aesthetic value. I do not offer here a sample translation of any of Correia's ritual descriptions. It is debatable whether their content had much ethnographic value even in their day. The modern reader might suspect that Correia's rituals served more to shore up his own standing as a top administrator; *Gentio de Timor*, in general, might be regarded as a literary precursor to the illustrious career Correia would subsequently enjoy in Portuguese Africa. In any case, we cannot glean anything from the descriptions of rituals about the relationship between Timorese customs and colonial governance.

Nor can we glean much from the way dealing with customs was formalised within the colonial administration. The desire to have officials and missionaries document customs, with a view to standardise and regulate this knowledge within the administrative and legal apparatus, resulted in a series of reports produced between 1926 and 1933, but they were never published, lamented the administrator, "not even in the government's colonial gazette, where they could have set a good example to incorporate an indigenous ethnography less superficial and laconic than what we currently have" (p. 347n1). Aside from a number of stark cases where particular customs were banned, taxed, appropriated or imitated (see Chapter Four), officials were for the most part left to muddle their way amidst the indigenous ways as they got to know them and learned to protect them, manage them, manipulate them, deride them, get rid of them, or just let them be.

To gain an appreciation of this muddling praxis of governance, there is no better place to look than to Correia's less formulaic, more experiential, presentation of mundane and extraordinary encounters between the Portuguese—usually the administrator himself—and the Timorese. Scattered throughout *Gentio de Timor*'s text and footnotes are ample clues as to how this administrator and some of his countrymen improvised with customs, just as the natives were adapting their customs to the ever-changing colonial context. Ultimately, what is more revealing of Timor at the time is not Correia's pure ethnography of ceremonies and much less any systematic application of knowledge of customs to governance, but rather the manifold stories, anecdotes, titbits and afterthoughts that tell of the administrator's at once personal and bureaucratic encounter with his native subjects. In the

remainder of this chapter, I portray Correia's *Gentio de Timor* in all its intellectual miscegenation, *impur sang*; I drive his ethnography backwards and upwards through that same sieve of his, according to my strict criteria to cast aside anything that is not deeply and truly "an encounter" replete with the contingencies and cross-fertilisations of two distinct peoples, one local and the other from another world.

Timorese Religion, God, Luminaries and Colonial Authority

Correia held that "Timorese religion" was based on "animist beliefs and the worship of ancestors" (p. 68). Adhering to a timeless view of tradition, the administrator understood that these animist beliefs and practices had evolved "in servile imitation of fathers and forefathers, adopting their fads, gestures, quirks and ideas, and performing ceremonies whose origins [had] been lost in the thick mist of the deep past" (p. 27). He likened Timorese lives to

a convoluted pathway along which the people proceed with utmost caution, surrounded and tortured by mysteries as well as their fears of the supernatural; they are constantly falling into traps put there by tormented souls that delight in bedevilling the living and bringing misfortune to them (p. 59).

In so far as Timorese animism could be considered religion, it was for Correia "rudimentary and theologically disorganised", scarcely defining a "conception of the dominant divinities" and unable to theorise the genesis of the universe, much less the origin of life" (p. 68).

Like Osório de Castro, Correia evidently went to some trouble to find out what God meant to the Timorese: "When pressed to translate for us the notion of God [Pt.: Deus], the natives render it as Uru Uato, which in the Makassae as well as in Uaimaa language means Lua Sol [Moon Sun]".⁴ Given that Correia explains elsewhere that only in one ceremony could the name of the "Baucau divinity"—Fidé Uru Uato—"be pronounced without risk of committing sacrilege" (p. 86), we may surmise that the administrator resorted to some cajoling to elicit his translation of God.

Similarly, only "with great reluctance" did the Makassae people confirm that ... there are two stars called Lela Dara and Lequi Luro. These are wrapped up in such intense superstition that we must suppose they are gods. Lela Dara is the Morning Star [Venus]; Lequi Luro is the brightest star in the constellation of

Orion. If a Timorese accidentally pronounces these prestigious names, he immediately beats his chest and runs off home to do penance by sacrificing a pair of fowls, one with rice for Lela Dara and the other with maize for Lequi Luro.

Correia observed that convictions such as these were so strong that "no matter how civilised and Christian the Timorese may be, they would never disregard them" (p. 69). He also acknowledged that many of the conceptual details, divine characteristics and social functions surrounding the divinities remained "mysterious". But mysterious to whom? To the administrator or to the Timorese themselves? On this point, Correia vacillated:

Unless—and this is also possible—with recourse only to basic languages devoid of abstract expression, yet with more concern for the benevolence and malevolence of the spirits [*os falunos*] that live in sacred spots of the land, and for their being in permanent contact with the living, the indigenous imagination has never been bothered to lay out a metaphysics or specify the idea of God. It would be too transcendent and rather disconnected from human action for the natives to personify Him and remove Him from the nebulous fog that envelops them ... An identical indeterminacy and formlessness surrounds the notion of Maromak in the Tetum-speaking areas ... Maromak is a word that the missionaries adopted from the Timorese, inserting it into their sermons to designate the Christian God, and so it came to be defined in dictionaries (p. 69, 315n1).

Irrespective of the belittling comparison of the Timorese "nebulous fog" with wizened European theology, it is possible that Correia strained to remove "the mystery" from the limitations of his own ethnography and, instead, project it onto the Timorese as an inherent feature of a foggy aboriginal metaphysics. An overriding spiritual pragmatism, Correia preferred to believe, led the Timorese to deal lightly with the major divinities compared to the attention they lavished on the more "trivial" souls of the dead (Pt.: *almas dos mortos*) who "obsess the living and shape or disrupt their entire lives from beginning to end". "The phrase *the dead command the living* is never applied so well to a land as it is to Timor", the administrator announced, indicating in his characteristic way that Timor was in a league of its own (p. 69).

On the relationship between Christianity and animism, Correia's history pre-empted his ethnography. Christianisation had not

proceeded as easily on Timor as it had on Solor, an island to the northwest, he said (p. 13). To explain Timorese mentality, Correia cited Afonso de Castro: "The people of Timor are extremely fixated on their customs ... believing that the religion preached by foreigners is nothing but a means to subjugate them." Correia explained that at some point in the past, missionaries had placed wooden crosses at sacred sites, particularly springs, to dissuade the Timorese from undertaking their rituals. They did this at the "Rock of Laleia" and the "Rock of Baucau" (Uai-Líli) and, noted the administrator, "since then their rituals were no longer carried out there" (p. 63n1).

Despite such measures, Correia regretted that for the "syncretism of Catholic theology and traditional animism, the natives do not offer great prospects for our religious instruction". A despondent priest who had been living in Timor for many years confided in the administrator: "When it comes to sincerity, the conversion of one Goan is worth more than one thousand sacraments applied to the Timorese." Correia remarked that "even the baptised Christians" did not desist from taking part in "pagan rituals", and contented themselves with making just a few concessions to Christianity: in his description of "the ritual of the new maize", Correia reported that at a certain point the pagan priest spat the betel chew onto the participants' foreheads and sprinkled it with water and blood from a ram, but when Christians took part in that "pagan rite" (Pt.: *estilo pagão*), "they [caught] the spittle on their right forearm [rather than the forehead], to prevent their committing a sin" (pp. 101–2n3).

Low-level syncretism of this kind was neither here nor there for the authorities. However, another kind of syncretism was treated rather differently. The government would immediately arrest or otherwise discourage any Timorese "charlatans", "fanatics", "luminaries", "visionaries" or "clairvoyants" who claimed to possess magical powers. Correia reported three cases, the first of which resembles Christian parable. In 1929, the authorities captured a "native charlatan" for having caused a commotion in Manatuto and Dili after persuading people to buy half-a-dozen grains of maize, each of which, when planted, was guaranteed to turn into an entire field of thriving plants. The second case occurred around the same time when a "luminary" was arrested in Aileu for having gathered a following and performed various rituals with the animals they provided him. This "fanatic" proclaimed himself the "Black Governor" and "prophesied apocalyptic events including the end of tax and the abandonment of the colony by the Portuguese". When "the clairvoyant" declared it illegal to chew

betel in front of him, a disaffected woman reported him. The third case arose in 1931 when a "visionary figure" led a "band of natives" from Hatolia to Dili where they all paraded about bearing a red and white flag (most likely the *lulik* flag of the former Portuguese monarchy), circled the Catholic church and "dared to go inside as far as the altar". The visionary's magical powers came from a glass ball "which he waved around theatrically" as well as a magic wand "with which he performed all manner of miracles". When the "gang of ragamuffins" returned to Hatolia, the commander sent for them. He "stripped their leader of his title as major, confiscated his flag and crushed his magic ball to pieces under his boots". The sect was never seen again (p. 124n1). Concluded Correia, "superstitious as ever, the Timorese are ready to believe in any practice that smacks of mystery" (p. 124). The government, understandably, tolerated a given range of native practices, ceremonies and syncretism, but it would not permit any religious movement that directly challenged the establishment.

Timorese Names and Name-Changing

The Catholic missions had long been measuring the success of their civilising mission by the number of conversions effected, and they religiously kept track of the ratio of pagans to Christians. Throughout the 1700s and 1800s, numbers were more important than names. This began to change in 1897 when the first civil registry for births, deaths and marriages was put into operation (Figueiredo 2004: 490). Individual identities, not just figures, became critical to the basic tools of statecraft, setting the stage for the state to institute the system of forced labour (in 1899), the new head tax placed on all adult males, tested first in Maubara (1901–02) and later extended across the territory (1906–08), and an ever-increasing raft of taxes (see Gunn 1999: 213; Kammen 2015: 99). More than ever before, the state wanted to know exactly who was who, making ordinary people, and not just notables, visible to government. As names became visible, so too did another phenomenon: name-changing.

The colonial magistrate, Osório de Castro, had been the first to offer an ethnographic description of the practice of name-changing. Correia cited him as follows:

The baby cannot begin to suckle until it has a name. If the baby cries, they keep giving it new names ... until the crying ceases. The

name given at the point of the baby's last sob is the one that the baby itself recognises as its proper name. But at any point in life another name can be taken if, for example, sickness is attributed to the evil eye (Correia 1934: 211-2).⁵

Curiously, Correia substituted the agency of the baby in recognising its proper name for that of the "sacred entity" or spirit [*faluno* or *lulik*]: "It is sufficient that the baby breaks out in crying at the time of the christening, or it refuses to feed from the breast, that his or her name is then changed, experimenting with a few options until the spirit [*faluno*] is satisfied."⁶ The new name "is far from definitive", said Correia echoing the magistrate (pp. 22-3). The youngster's name could change with each new illness that afflicted him or her, "frequently choosing names of remote ancestors which have the magic power to ward off the evils of sorcery—evils with which Timor, in the indigenous mind, is chock-a-block". Name changes could continue into adulthood, added the administrator: "one might change one's name after being brought close to death by an attack of malaria, in order not to be recognised by the evil spirit" (p. 24).

Osório de Castro had given no indication that Timorese name-changing created a problem for the colony; past changes of name were perhaps of little concern in his courtroom (so long as the accused was really the accused). For those directly involved in census-taking and tax-collecting, and for whom consistency over successive years was essential for identifying subjects and maintaining records, name-changing assumed another complexion. Wrote Correia:

It is easy to imagine the administrative mistakes and nuisances that result at the annual census. The insistent census officer accuses the village chief of concealing the existence of a certain Uai Lale, who figures in the registry of the preceding years; the chief refuses to concede that among his people there was ever a so-named creature; and at the end of a long debate, they reach the conclusion that such a Uai Lale is present, alive and well, and has paid his tax punctually and lawfully, but that everyone has known him as Lacu Meta, and even Lacu Meta himself has forgotten his prior name (p. 24).

In a footnote Correia (p. 24n2) added that "names are changed like loincloths and are attributed such importance that during the registry process a man could sometimes be seen fearfully vacillating and stuttering over the current name of his wife or his children".

If Martinho (1943: 194) suggested that "there was no better way to disorient a spirit than to change the sex of one's name" (which accounted for the fact that there were men with women's names and vice versa), Correia (1934: 24) proposed that name-changing might have been a strategy employed by the Timorese in order "not to be identified by the authorities in their vagrancy" (when vagrancy meant moving outside one's home *posto* or district without a permit).

Perhaps now is the right moment to insert the remarks of British-Australian ethnographer Margaret King. When misfortune strikes, a Timorese will frequently

change his name for a more auspicious one. Thus the Pedro or Rui or José of one census will appear at the next census as Reci or Fernando or João and only under great pressure admit to the former personality. The resultant confusion on the official records causes him no concern at all. To him the only point is that no hint be given of his new personality to the malignant forces who persisted in dogging his old self. He cannot perceive the necessity for the insistence that, for the sake of conformity in the records, he presents a single personality to the authorities.

King, more forgiving than Correia, concluded that this "inconsistency" in Timorese naming behaviour was "both irritating and endearing" (King 1963a: 186). King's name-changers were not hiding their prior name from the colonial authorities but hiding themselves from malevolent spirits who might unwittingly be invoked. I imagine that both Correia and King were right: name-changing was at once animism and transformative animism.

Death, Burial and the Hereafter

The Portuguese in Timor did not approve of dead bodies lying around above ground. Correia recalled that at the turn of the century Governor Celestino da Silva had intervened to see the *liurai* of Raiméan finally buried after 105 years (Correia 1934: 167; cf. Teixeira 1939: 201). The Portuguese made it mandatory to bury a person the day after his or her death, and only under licence could exceptions be made for local rulers and warriors. By the 1930s it was customary for the corpse of a *liurai* to be seated in a chair for four or five days so that "the people could pay their final respects", said Correia (1934: 241n2). He noted that after the death of a person a vigil ensued. The kin would take turns day and night, during which

"they would wait hours, days, weeks and even months in the case of an aristocrat". Whether for the burial of a noble or a commoner, time had to be made for the whole family of the wife-giving house and the wife-taking house to assemble: "the family of a deceased is always extensive and complicated, and is distributed across every corner of the district if not across the whole colony" (p. 167). It was important, Correia indicated, that all cats be caught and tied up, for "should a single pussy happen to jump on the coffin the deceased would return to life" (p. 177n1; cf. Schulte Nordholt 1971: 340).

The common practice of redrawing administrative boundaries brought disruption to native burial practice. Correia reported an instance that arose following the establishment of the administrative post of Baguia, which resulted in the division of the inhabitants between the districts of Baucau and Viqueque. Ignoring the new boundary, the people "stubbornly insisted on crossing the border" to bury their dead in the villages from where they hailed. "Such was the decisive power of tradition," Correia regretted. One Portuguese sergeant in Baguia won infamy for himself by ordering his people to disinter one such corpse because the deceased was not enrolled within his jurisdiction (Correia 1934: 180n1).

Correia was more specific than other ethnographers about where souls dwelled. In the Baucau region, he learned, once the souls had left the corpses they took up residence in one of several sacred resting spots, among which figured Dacibuináa, on the bare plains of Caibada, one kilometre west of Seiçal; Uásica, the rocky lands that fall from Caicido to the point of Bondura, "a vast extension of hostile and deserted landscape"; and "the vertical peaks of Matebian" that "rise 2,350 metres above sea level and dominate the colony's eastern massif" (p. 70). Matebian, explained the administrator, meant "souls [*bian*] of the dead [*mate*]" (p. 70n1). But detecting discrepancies in the beliefs of the natives, Correia deduced that not all souls met the same destiny: some Timorese believed that those who had committed murder or incest, thieved, been poor or rebelled against their parents were liable to be reincarnated as wild pigs or deer with antlers; others held that reprobate souls were locked up inside dungeons where they atoned for their evil deeds, while those who faithfully observed the traditional taboos "would hover and flutter around the villages of their kinfolk, at least for some time" (p. 70).

The Timorese, Correia wrote, were particularly afraid of wandering souls (Pt.: *almas penadas*).

Their terror is so severe ... that very few Timorese venture out into the night alone. Whenever our office needs to dispatch a courier to some military post at sunset bearing an urgent message or order to be carried out, we have to send two people. The Timorese themselves insist on going in pairs, but if for their timidity they do not dare to ask for company, it is known that the lone messenger will shelter in some village or hideout until dawn, before carrying out his duty the next day.

Of course it was mainly at night when the souls wandered about menacingly. (One may wonder why the curfew was necessary.) The administrator stressed that for the Timorese such beings manifested physically, and many Timorese had come across them lying prostrate in the middle of the road, poised to bring misfortune upon those careless enough to tread on them; alternatively, they discerned their silhouettes against the hills, where they "gesticulated chillingly or emitted guttural cries" (p. 71).

Correia assembled information on death and burials from other parts of the colony, relying principally on the ethnographic reports of military commanders and administrators stationed elsewhere. Drawing on José Martinho's report on Oecusse, Correia stated that "in this region, as in the rest of Timor, the burial ceremonies are one of the most flagrant causes of indigenous poverty and lead to the ruin of families" (p. 237). He cited Martinho:

The killing of animals is absolutely necessary. Without this, the soul of the deceased cannot find repose and not even the living kin can find peace, fearing the reprisals of the spurned or neglected soul. There are those who believe that the animals slaughtered during rituals will be resuscitated in the places where the dead souls live and will constitute their first wealth. While not everybody accepts this position, an entrenched belief concerns the metempsychosis of the soul. And I don't know if it is a joke or whether they really do believe it, but they say that the soul of a white man will be reincarnated as a dog, and that of a Timorese as a deer.

Correia upheld what he considered an important ethnographic distinction for Oecusse: unlike in other parts of the colony, in Oecusse there was no memory of burying the *liurai* alongside their favourite servants so that the latter could serve their king in the next life too. The people of that enclave, the administrator quoted Martinho, "believe in the soul, but it is a soul without a spiritual existence,

since on the other side of death they have the same preoccupations, the same needs, the same feelings and the same instincts" (p. 237).

Correia also consulted Lieutenant Manuel Jesus Pires' unpublished report on customs in Manatuto. When the coffin was lowered into the grave, that report stated, an old man delivered a public lecture in which he pronounced the merits of the deceased, "all of which [was] expressed in a language that nobody [understood], not even the old man himself ... starting with mysterious words that his father [had] taught him and which [had been] passed down the family line from one generation to another like a patrimony" (p. 238). The administrator added that in many parts of Timor "the same could be said for the soloists of funerary songs as well as the traditional dance" (p. 238n2). Correia was perhaps consoled by the idea that what Portuguese ethnography could not account for, the Timorese did not know themselves (see Schulte Nordholt 1971: 6).

Sacred Landscapes, Animals, Objects, Taboos and Interventions

Correia was fascinated by sacred (*faluno* or *lulik*) objects. "The number of holy things is endless," he said. His list covered natural phenomena such as cliffs, forests, springs, animals, rocks and stones (Correia 1934: 59). It included anthropomorphic figurines such as the "two roughshod dolls made of gravel adorned with areca nuts and coconuts" at the hot water spring of Uai Cana (p. 63n1). It also included sacred family heirlooms, mementos of the ancestors, swords and spears, gold and silver crescents, flintlock rifles, rusty locks, Portuguese flags of the monarchic era, military caps and metallic helmets displaying insignias of extinct military detachments (pp. 59–60).

In former times, all of these sacred tutelary objects were stored in sacred houses, which were "like museums". But, Correia surmised, "when thieves began to lose their superstitious reverence for these church-museums, they would pillage them without fear of reprisals from the spirits", leaving only earthenware pots and palm baskets used in ritual. Thus, prized sacred objects that risked "awakening the heretic avidity of thieves" were now hidden in the houses of chiefs or common folk who had maintained their respect for the ancestral nobility class. What Correia does not mention, however, is that "thieves" were not the only culprits: as we will see in Chapter Six, Catholic clergy, too, had much to answer for.

Irrespective of how the sacra left their home, Correia told of how they were becoming compromised by mercantilism:

I will never forget the expression of terror with which an old lady, widowed to a chief, barged into my office begging me to go in pursuit of her incorrigibly lazy son, who a few days before the death of her husband had made off with some sacred gold discs that had been entrusted to the household. The rascal sold them to a Chinese merchant who then sent them to Dili for his compatriots to melt them down for fine jewellery (p. 61).

The discs were deemed irreplaceable and their loss would bring disgrace and misfortune upon the family. "My husband is dead and we will all die as well, *Senhor!*" sobbed the inconsolable woman to the administrator. The woman evidently kept returning to his office, and each time she looked "more and more emaciated": "her orbits were caving in, her eyes flashed with dementia and the wretched woman was wasting away through angst and woe". Not knowing what eventually came of her, Correia would not have been surprised "if the power of her own convictions had killed her". This experience may have had something to do with the fact that the trade in gold discs was banned in 1933 to prevent the erosion of "traditional indigenous wealth" (p. 61n1). Perhaps, too, this counts as the first case in Timorese colonial history of legislating in order to conserve indigenous patrimony.

Clearly, the "traditional" value of sacred objects was being usurped by new economic values, which in turn encouraged colonial officials to protect what colonialism itself was undermining. One day Correia was called to conduct a search on Gariuai Mountain in the house of the chief of Dae Me Naha because it had been alleged that the chief had received goods stolen in a great robbery committed in Uailili. When the administrator arrived he failed to locate any of the stolen booty. But he was intrigued by what he called "the sacred objects of the village", among which figured a military cap and a helmet dating back to the beginning of the previous century as well as a Malay dagger. Since Correia was planning to set up a small regional museum in Baucau, he purchased them from Dae Me Naha for a decent sum of money. However, sickness subsequently broke out in the village and Dae Me Naha, regretting the sale, made three visits together with a cohort of princes (Pt.: *principais*) to the administrator's office, insisting that the sacred items were in fact priceless and begging him to return "the treasure". The chief, "pallid

and terrified", exclaimed that "the whole village will die if the hats are not returned to the sacred house!" The administrator understood that these were no ordinary hats: they had been handed to Dae Me Naha by his grandfather who had once received them from a local ruler of Venilale after helping the whites to suppress an indigenous uprising (p. 62). Correia does not tell us whether he gave back the hats and dagger and whether the village was saved from sickness as a result; nor does he point to the obvious fickleness of the local people as they tried to reconcile established *lulik* powers and the colonial demand for *lulik* artefacts. But if what Correia says is true, it is noteworthy that he acquired his museum pieces by purchase or exchange, even, I assume, the two skulls that the chief of Tirilolo gave him for the same museum (Correia 1944: 56n1). Local people evidently had rights over the sacred objects in their possession, and their taking was a matter of exchange or gifting rather than confiscation, or so it seems.

The same degree of respect did not necessarily apply to sacred land. Correia shares a story about the sacred spring of Aubaca, which bubbled under the cover of a large, equally sacred, tree. Against the tree was propped a "makeshift altar", on which the administrator had often noticed small offerings of coconut, areca and meat. There came a time when he, in all his zeal for irrigation systems (for which he was famed), decided to have the spring widened by opening up a cave. A workforce of native men was mobilised, but no sooner had the picks begun to strike at the rock than the number of offerings to the spring spirit proliferated; over and above the regular array of gifts, a chicken was sacrificed. Anticipating the worst, the ritual priest convened a ritual and, examining the entrails of a goat, warned that three men were destined to die during the excavations at the hands of the outraged water spirit. "A few days later," Correia wrote, "the prophecy was fulfilled" (at least in part) when one worker died. Still, the administrator insisted that the work proceed. Next, he had the men cut away branches of the huge sacred tree to allow more light to fall on the coffee seedlings he had made the men plant in its shade. It is hardly surprising that when the administrator showed up, he noticed a group of men "roasting a piglet and a goat in honour of the spirit of the tree in case the mutilation had angered it". At the foot of the tree, said the administrator observing the hyper-animism that he had no term for, there was "no lack of sacred spears dressed with areca" (Correia 1934: 62).

The late 1920s was a period of frenetic road building to accommodate motorised transport. If for hundreds of years the colonial authorities had relied principally on a pre-existing indigenous network of pathways and tracks, many of these could not be widened and levelled to suit vehicular transport. Roads for vehicles had to follow more gentle and stable terrain. We do not know how many new roads cut through sacred forests or other sacred sites, but from what we have learned about the siting of plantations it is unlikely that officials were prepared to build costly detours around sacred areas just to please superstitious natives. Correia reported that when construction of the road to Laga commenced in 1927, a large sacred boulder had to be dynamited out of the way: "The death of two workers caused by a delayed explosion served to confirm the natives' superstitions" (p. 63). Like many colonials in Timor, the administrator relished pointing out the irony of "when superstition came true"; for the natives, of course, there was no irony about it.

When "the sacred" obstructed infrastructural or agricultural works, it was chopped down, cut back, picked through, filled in, dug out, carted off or blown up. But there was at least one case in which the domain of the sacred, rather, had to be updated to correspond with the modern political history of the coloniser. Correia registered that when the Republicans had seized power from the Portuguese monarch in 1910, the change of flag caused widespread upset among the Timorese population since they had long regarded as sacred the Portuguese white and blue flag (p. 59). Indeed, it had been Governor Soveral Martins who, upon learning of the new Republic in Portugal, had announced that all "monarchist symbols" should be discarded (Kammen 2015: 101). The Republicans distributed the new flag among the indigenous kingdoms from late 1910, but the substitution was not readily accepted. (Historians have pointed out that the flag substitution may have contributed to the tensions that led to the War of Manufahi.) The flags of the defunct Portuguese monarchy, however, were retained in sacred houses without alteration to their holiness. Correia recounted a curious experience when he visited Uato Lari in 1929. It had been many years since the people there had encountered a European, said the administrator, and they welcomed the official visit ceremoniously with an old white and blue flag. When Correia chastised them they apologised, explaining that they had not had time to send for the new flag (Correia 1934: 59n2). "Has 20 years not been long enough?" might have been the administrator's sharp rebuke.

Some Portuguese officials clearly delighted in fooling with animist precepts. On the boundary between Laga and Quelecai, a sergeant decided to show off by killing a sacred eel that lived in a pool beneath a waterfall, and "the terror this produced among the local people was huge". Correia explained that to them the "sacred eel is eternal", it was "contemporaneous with the origins of the tribe" and was capable of "rewarding the tribe with its presence or bringing grave misfortune upon it should they allow the eel to go hungry or should they kill it" (p. 64). Correia, naturally, failed to draw a parallel between what the eel could do and what both the sergeant and he, the administrator, could do, namely bring rewards or misfortune in this perfect example of transformative animism.

The gecko (Pt.: *tóquè*; Tetum: *teki*) was "another animal that the natives never kill by their own initiative" and the Timorese "show repugnance when a European orders them to kill one". Said Correia: "They treat the gecko as a spirit ancestor, whose almost-human grating voice gives them the heebie jeebies, announcing from high in the ceilings or from the tops of the trees—*tóquè, tóquè, tóquè*—how many years remain before they die" (pp. 67, 322n1). It is not clear why a European would have ordered the Timorese to kill a gecko, if not to watch in glee as the natives took fright. Correia's writing gives the impression that unlike his compatriots, he himself refrained from gratuitously taunting his hapless subjects. Let's recall the administrator's words from a previous quote: "The indigenes of this colony do not permit their mockery" and "they recoil at the irreverence of Europeans who provoke the irascible spirits" (p. 88). Correia, however, was likely to have been in on the joke when at an evening meal his own Makassae scribe was dished up tabooed beans disguised as purée, thereby "making him disobey the taboo and thus forcing him to undertake rituals of purification" (p. 322n1).

Correia moved from the Timorese terminology of *lulik* and *faluno* (sacred) to the more global terminology of taboo with little distinction, using the terms synonymously when applied to specific prohibitions. The administrator referred to "an interesting taboo" in Maluro and Laisorolai where "no one planted areca trees or chewed the nut". (He did not specify whether or not the trees were totems.) Correia was blunt: "I finished with their taboo when I created the village nurseries ... and obliged every native throughout the district to plant 50 trees per year." Another taboo (apparently unrelated to

totemism) was similarly forced into disuse because the administrator refused to modify his official attire:

In the village of Uaniuma it was not allowed to enter the chief's hamlet wearing trousers. I was the first European to go in with pants on. I had just arrived in the district and I did the rounds of all the villages, one by one. The indigenous administrators who worked for me, however, were most alarmed when I told them the night before that one of them would be going with me, and I would certainly not permit him to go without the European uniform that was mandatory while on duty (pp. 67–8).

Should we believe that previous Portuguese administrators or military commanders in Baucau had respectfully removed their trousers, leaving just their underpants, before entering that chief's hamlet?

When there was no clash of interests between European customs and Timorese ones, taboos and spirits were often just ethnographic curiosities. Correia reported that it was prohibited to consume palm wine in certain spots (such as the spring of Baucau), that a man who urinated on a sacred object would reputedly go crazy, and that in days gone by it was prohibited to directly touch the Portuguese flag or even step into the shadow it cast (p. 68). For their part, the Portuguese could hardly have minded which shadows the Timorese did or did not step into, where they drank their wine or where they urinated (so long as it was not on them). But when there was a clash, European customs came first; their customs ranged from economic interests to everyday protocols, and included even the most basic of pleasures that could be had—like taunting the natives—in a place where licit pleasures were notoriously few.

In 1934, Correia was nominated "First Class Administrator". He took from Timor accolades and prizes for his dedication, hard work and accomplishments, particularly in child welfare, school construction and plantation development (Fonseca 2012: 3). His *Gentio de Timor* gives the impression that he was a sensitive man, attuned to the ways of the Timorese people. He certainly made friends with Timorese; his first monograph, in fact, was dedicated to 14 of his Timorese friends who were "the best indigenes of Timor" (p. 6). During his time in Timor and after his death, he received wide admiration for his service in Timor and for his literary achievements. But some were less certain, including Ruy Cinnati in his poetic *Paisagens Timorenses* [Timorese Landscapes] (1996a: 47; cited

in Fonseca 2002: 6). In one poem, Cinatti called Correia "the violent administrator" who "kicked" the Timorese who he claimed to love. In his *Gentio de Timor*, Correia only allows us glimpses of his violence—for example his dismissal of "the sacred" as superstition and his routine disavowal of what were commonly called *os lulics*, the spirits.

Cinatti's provocative poem invites us to wonder how much remains unsaid in *Gentio de Timor*; to what extent did Correia pass the representation of his own administration through a rigorous sieve, discarding anything that revealed his excesses and possibly even hiding the violence of his administration precisely through his claim to knowledge—his highly authoritative ethnography. After the publication of the book, he was promoted to Chief Inspector of Angola's Administrative Services and, later, Governor of Zambezia. As we saw in the introduction to this book, Correia had ordered the people of Seical to kill their totem crocodile-ancestor, Avô Lai Liba; they refused, so Correia killed it himself with his gun. If the people of Seical had learned of their former administrator's untimely death (to suicide) in Mozambique in 1943, at age 46, about a decade after the murder of their Avô Lai Liba, they would not have been surprised, but they might have wondered why it took their spirit totem so long to exact revenge.

6

The Missionary (An ethnography of extremes)

Abílio José Fernandes was born in northeastern Portugal in 1890. At age 14, he commenced study in Macau's Seminary of São José. He was ordained in 1914 and posted to Timor that same year. Father Fernandes was based at the Central Mission of Soibada in the southern kingdom of Samoro for the next 15 years, initially as mission prefect and teacher and then as the mission Superior. In 1929 he became the parish priest of Dili and, shortly after, the Vicar General Superior of the Timor Missions. He left Timor in 1938, having spent 23 years on the island. He is now remembered as one of Timor's "great missionaries" and an "outstanding pedagogue" who vigorously pushed Catholicism forwards, establishing new missions in Suro, Hatolia, Baucau and Ossú as well as numerous parishes. Fernandes was also one of Timor's great clerical writers and ethnographers. He penned dozens of articles and one monograph, *Esboço Histórico e do Estado Actual das Missões de Timor* [Historical Outline and Current State of the Timor Missions] (Belo 2016: 7–10, 13–4).

Missões de Timor was initiated in January 1931 after the governor's secretary invited Fernandes to submit a leaflet on the activities of the Timor Catholic Missions for the Portuguese Colonial Exhibition in Paris. Fernandes was not far into the writing, however, when the ex-governor Teófilo Duarte's new monograph, *Timor* (1930), fell into the hands of the priests at Lahane. At this point, *Missões de Timor* radically changed course. "We could not permit Duarte's gratuitous and disrespectful remarks and unjust claims about Timor's Missions to go unchallenged," Fernandes objected in the preface (2016 [1931]: 23). By the 12th chapter, Fernandes unleashed his full vehemence:

"Duarte's writing is criminal and barbarous and no more cultured than the savages" (p. 133). So Fernandes' book turned into a vicious rebuke of a vicious Duarte, just as he tacked on a fitting subtitle: *Refutação de Algumas Falsidades contra elas Caluniosamente Afirmadas por um Ex-governador de Timor* [Refuting Some Falsities Defamatorily Affirmed Against the Timor Missions by an Ex-governor of Timor].

Fernandes was understandably upset by many of Duarte's allegations: that Christianisation in Timor had proceeded at "snail's pace" (p. 83); that the Dominicans and Salesians far outclassed the Franciscans, Jesuits and Canossian Sisters (pp. 56, 143); that the priesthood was implicated in misdeeds surrounding indigenous women and girls (p. 155); and that missionaries only taught prayer, while failing at everything else (p. 160). But a couple of Duarte's statements galled Fernandes to the core: "In the eyes of the natives, missionaries are sorcerers"; "like Timorese sorcerers, missionaries are thieves over whom the state should keep watch"; yet, missionary sorcerers were even worse than their Timorese counterparts, Duarte wrote, because from the native people "they demand higher payments and receive more presents" (pp. 81, 123).¹

What, exactly, was so hurtful about likening missionaries to sorcerers? The Portuguese in Timor had long used the generic term *feiticeiros* (sorcerers or pagan priests; Pt.: *sacerdote gentílico*; Tetum: *dato lulik*, *makai lulik*, *nai lulik*, *rai lulik*) disdainfully to characterise those Timorese who dealt in magic. Fernandes himself depicted the *makai lulik* or "sorcerers of the kingdoms" as "true swindlers, who exploited the people extorting their buffalo, chickens, goats and pigs" for curing any illness with any remedy;² and worse still, they were "an oracle among pagans", for "they only have to utter a word and the most innocent person will be condemned to death". "The mere fact of carrying the title of '*makai lulik*'", Fernandes' (2016: 47) cried, "should suffice for the authorities to round them up and punish them; they are extremely dangerous robbers whose every crime goes unreported by natives who fear the retribution of the *luliks*". "Sorcerer" (Pt.: *feiticeiro*) was also often applied to another figure, namely the healer or witchdoctor (Pt.: *curandeiro*; Tetum: *matan dook*) (Pascoal 1936a). These men, too, were widely perceived as charlatans; they presented a moral travesty and were made a laughing stock (Duarte 1930: 135; Martinho 1943: 254). Because missionaries saw sorcery as the devil's handiwork, we can easily imagine how Fernandes agonised over Duarte's cruel indictment.

In his *Missões de Timor*, Fernandes took great pains over 129 pages, 17 chapters and 32 photographs to parade the tireless travail of missionaries in life-threatening circumstances, their great self-sacrifice and dedication to the Timorese who needed saving from their devilish sorcerers and superstitions. The monograph thus emerges as an ethnography of extremes, strung between the love, charity, truth, sanctity and reason of enlightened Christians versus the hate, malevolence, deceit, fear and superstition of Godless pagans and wicked sorcerers. It was an ethnography that spoke to the moral duty of converting “pagan wolves into little lambs”, outlawing sorcery, and building a new Christian indigenous society (Fernandes 1927: 187). Yet, *Missões de Timor* was something else besides: it was an expression of the deep wound that lay in the heart of a Catholicism bullied and ridiculed by secularists. The book thus stands as a beautiful example of how the ethnographised Timorese were dragged into the acrimony that had long bedevilled two colonial groups—state and clergy.

Fernandes died in 1944 (Belo 2016: 12). He may well return from the dead when I contend in this chapter that Duarte was right: the Timorese *did* perceive missionaries as “sorcerers” akin to their own. In fact, it seems to me that the many tales Fernandes tells of “prestigious” missionaries in Timor rather confirm what he sought to refute. In other words, his recognition of the great prestige Timorese attributed to missionaries was really based on the latter’s manifest connection to the *Timorese* spirit world. In line with the argument of this book, priests, like Portuguese governors and colonial officials, may have been structurally homologous to spirits for they embodied the possibilities of good and bad; they incited trust and offered protection, but they also posed danger; they were revered, but also feared. But priests possessed an added quality, for they commanded *lulik* powers just like their counterpart Timorese sorcerers and healers. They straddled both sides of the animistic divide; they were like spirits, yet they were also like the animist priests who exerted power over spirits. Given these slippages between priests, sorcerers and spirits, we should not be surprised that Timorese dignified the priests with the same term of address that they also reserved for the highest-ranking native “animistic priest”—*nai lulik* (Cinatti 1987: 184).

Conquest by the Cross

Father António Taveiro was the first friar to figure in Fernandes’ history. Fernandes’ Taveiro disembarked in Kupang in the mid 1500s

(Fernandes 2016: 55). He “endeared himself to the natives, wandering into the forests, speaking to those savage people, showing them the crucifix and teaching them the scriptures in language that was accessible to their crude intelligence”. If Taveiro’s “harvest of conversions was scant”, Fernandes knew from the Bible that “one sows and another reaps” (p. 37). So, when Father António de São Jacinto appeared the following century, he succeeded in winning over this people to God (see also Hägerdal 2012: 150–1). After Jacinto came Father Cristóvão Rangel, “who baptised the king of Silában, who then took the name of Cristóvão, and with him almost the entire royal family” (Fernandes 2016: 55). All of this represented the “most glorious of conquests”, “for it was not by arms but by the cross, not by violence but by love” (p. 56).

Yet, Catholicism was clearly not all love in Fernandes’ missionary history. He speculated—practically anticipating my notion of transformative animism—that the sorcerers “must have sensed that their future was in danger ... and put great pressure on the people, threatening them with the revenge of their spirit ancestors”. The missionaries, meanwhile, pushed against the sorcerers, “preaching to the people the horrible punishments dealt to those who resisted God’s divine grace” (p. 51). What we see here is an ethnographic history of double-terror: a contest arises between the wrath of God and the wrath of the spirits, between Catholics and sorcerers. To the Timorese, however, it must have seemed that God behaved much like their own vengeful spirits, and the white priests much like their own priests; indeed, they did.

More and more missionaries arrived, Fernandes goes on. The western side of the island was Christianised first. Then the missionaries moved eastwards. They split into two: one group evangelised along the north coast, from Batugadé to Laleia; the other along the south coast, from Suai to Luca. A seminary was founded in Oecusse in 1734 and a second one in Manatuto in 1747; by 1780 there were 50 churches (p. 60). Bringing Christianity to the natives, however, was not without its perils. The reader “can only have the highest level of sympathy for what the missionaries had to endure”, since they “paid with their life, were massacred or poisoned, speared to death for opposing pagan ceremonies and preventing polygamy” (p. 61).

All of this represented “the golden age”, which ended in 1834 when the “criminal liberals” in Portugal decreed the expulsion of the religious orders from the colonies. The Dominicans abandoned Timor and Christianity quickly collapsed. Because the Timorese were

like “children who never matured”, Fernandes explained, they “only persevered in their faith if the missionaries led them, like mothers supporting their infants when learning to walk; but when left alone, they fall, surrounded by pagans who entice the new Christians back into idolatry” (pp. 38, 65). At the time, a few Goan priests came to Timor, but they stooped so low as to “baptise adults without even teaching them about the cross” (p. 127); elsewhere, we learn that these priests lapsed into paganism themselves (Davidson 1994: 36).

The “resurrection” of Christianity began four decades later when the Portuguese state allowed missionaries to return. Father António Joaquim de Medeiros arrived with seven missionaries in 1875. Medeiros spread his staff across the half-island (Fernandes 2016: 70, 127). The numbers of missionaries increased, decent churches were built and mission schools were founded. In Lahane, a building was constructed to board the sons of chiefs, who, receiving a religious education *for free*, would eventually become Christian chiefs themselves (p. 71). In 1897, the Lahane Mission was extended 400 metres further up the mountainside to Dare (p. 87). From this point on, *Missões de Timor* presents the turn-of-the-century institutional growth of Catholicism, organised around the northern Central Mission of Lahane and the new, southern Central Mission of Soibada.

Four Jesuit missionaries, led by Father Sabastião Maria Aparício da Silva, built up the Central Mission of Soibada. In 1900, the four set to establishing a church, a residency and a boarding house for 80 students (pp. 94–5). (That construction relied on indigenous labour was never mentioned.) Within a decade, the Soibada Mission would have eight missionaries, some of whom would be stationed in the surrounding kingdoms of Barique, Lacluta, Viqueque, Alas and Same (pp. 96, 111). Meanwhile, the Canossian Sisters, whose presence in Timor dated back to 1878, led the Christianisation of young native women, particularly the daughters of chiefs. After establishing two schools in Dili and Bidau where young native girls “came from all over the island”, the nuns followed the Jesuits to Soibada where in 1902 they set up a ladies’ college for 80 girls. The girls were “inducted into the faith just as they learned sewing, embroidery, knitting and music” (pp. 71, 95).

From Lahane and Soibada, Christian-led education radiated out to mission colleges in Dili, Oecusse, Batugadé, Maubara, Liquiçá, Bazartete, Lacló, Manatuto, Laleia, Baucau, Lacluta, Alas, Barique and Bibiçuçu (p. 96). However, the “glorious time” fell apart in 1910 following the proclamation of the anticlerical Republic in Portugal,

whose aim was to secularise the colonies. The Jesuits were forced out. The Canossians went with them, leaving 400 girls, some "without parents, like little birds without a nest ... weeping inconsolably ... as they left the house where they had received the love and tenderness they had never experienced at home". The "government has a heart of stone", Fernandes bemoaned, and "not even the natives could fathom such heartlessness" (p. 101). Fernandes regularly deployed a narrative strategy common in colonial Timor: to depict a colonial behaviour as utterly deplorable was to present it as surpassing what "even the savages" were capable of—Duarte, in fact, had done exactly that by ranking Portuguese priests below Timorese sorcerers.

After 1910, only a handful of diocesan priests (that is, "secular" priests not linked to the Catholic Orders) remained. Then, from 1914, missionaries, including Fernandes himself, edged back into Timor. The gradual resuscitation of colleges began under the government's condition that they only teach (pp. 128–9). Because priests were few, Fernandes notes, the School of Teacher-Catechists was born in Lahane "to prepare zealous and pious Timorese" and thus "instruct the native via the native" (p. 108). The curriculum included: Portuguese language, geography, history, physics and natural sciences; Tetum language development, pedagogy, civility and agriculture; catechism, liturgy and the holy sacraments (for example, baptism, marriage, last rites and viaticum) (p. 110). However, only with the 1926 formation of the National Dictatorship in Portugal did the state properly endorse the Catholic Missions in Timor again; "the sun began to shine", wrote Fernandes happily.³

The Travelling Sorcerer

By this stage, Fernandes had finished his nine-year period of teaching (1914–23) and, as the Superior of the Soibada Mission (1924–29), had taken on missionary work in the surrounding kingdoms such as Barique, Luca, Lacluta and Laclubar. Fernandes' journeys to the distant kingdoms or parishes are the subject of many anecdotes of arduous travel by horseback in torrential rain, crossing crocodile-infested rivers, beating through forest undergrowth lost in mist, and slipping into deep ravines only to be saved finger-tip style by the outstretched arm of his servant, if not by the grace of God. Fernandes would report on his toils, preaching then baptising as many pagans as he could in one kingdom, then rising before dawn the next day and pressing on to the next kingdom. Some places were

more problematic than others. In the southern kingdom of Luca, Fernandes found the people “so afraid of their *luliks* that they dared not leave the mosquito-infested swamp, even though disease was killing them in ever greater numbers”; and the people of Lacluta were so hungry and busy (searching for food in the forests) that they had no time for catechism (Fernandes 1926: 402–3). The priest’s humour helped him to cope with the hardships. He recounts how he risked his life to travel 40 kilometres, arriving after midnight to anoint “dying” people, who turned out to have a sore finger or a stomach ache (see Belo 1916: 8–9).

Fernandes faithfully recorded the numbers of baptisms, evidently deriving great satisfaction from “a large harvest”. He would compile statistics for every kingdom he visited (Fernandes 1926: 405). Later, when based at the Central Mission of Lahane, he would do so for the whole colony. He invites his readers to dwell for a few moments on the following figures “to appreciate the extent of the missionary enterprise”. A “Chart of religious activities of the Timor Missions, July 1, 1929 to June 30, 1930” showed that across the colony priests baptised 357 adults and 537 infants; took 64,452 confessions; held 159,418 communions; anointed 74 sick; married 145 couples; delivered 669 sermons; and attracted 5,003 attendees to catechism classes (Fernandes 2016: 120).

The reader of *Missões de Timor* is certainly left with the impression that Fernandes and his fellow priests and nuns worked extremely hard at “cultivating the vineyard of the Lord” (p. 119). Even though the Timorese were, by nature, “ungrateful”, and did not even have a word for “thank you” until the Portuguese gave them one (*obrigado*), “in the face of these frequent gestures of charity, they cannot help but break out in exclamations of appreciation” (pp. 44, 123). It was “little wonder” that “the natives have the greatest respect and veneration for missionaries”.

If anyone should doubt these words, he would verify their truth if he could have entered the church of Soibada last week, where *there was not an empty space* and where *all* the Christians of Lacluta, Laclubar, Barique, Teras and Samoro came to pay their respects to the soul of a deceased missionary who passed away eight days before in Dili, the victim of typhoid fever. One has only to look into the tearful eyes of the indigenous people to be struck by the affection they devote to their pastor (p. 123) [emphasis added].

Is it not possible that *all* the Timorese “Christians” felt obliged to turn up to church on that occasion, just as they would for an animist funeral, since should one person be absent, would not the spirit of the deceased be angered and seek vengeance on the living? Was this Christian burial still a sort of pagan burial? (We learn from Teixeira [1939: 202] that priests used to “order the Timorese to attend mass so ghosts wouldn’t come to haunt them”).

Later, in 1929, Fernandes moved to Dili to become the parish priest, from where he visited the missions of Fatumassi, Maubara and Liquiçá every two months (Belo 2016: 8–10). He continued the same outreach after he was promoted to Superior of the Timor Missions in 1931. As Catholicism spread its tendrils, Fernandes ventured further south to Suro and west to Bobonaro. As always, he performed baptisms, which marked the point at which pagans crossed the line into Christianity, thus securing their entry into what new converts learned was a good place (that is, heaven) in the sky.

Baptism, however, frequently ran into logistical problems. For example, said Fernandes, it was inconvenient when one member of a couple could be christened, but not the other. Fernandes recalled one case during a visit to Suro in 1932. A woman there had just passed her pre-baptism exam after “parroting the catechism perfectly”. Then “the husband entered the scene” who “made the sign of the cross back to front, that is from right to left”. Then the wife became despairing, which “filled [Fernandes] with pity, but also made [him] laugh”. Asked to recite the Ten Commandments, the husband then “got stuck at the fifth”. Fernandes told the husband that he would have to wait a couple of months before being retested. For the wife, it was as if the priest “had uttered a death sentence”. She broke out in tears.

“I’ve been waiting one year for this baptism, and any day I could die a pagan. *Senhor Padre*, I want to be a Christian. I’m afraid of being pagan,” she wailed.

“I can’t baptise you while you are living with a pagan. Wait just two months,” I replied.

“Please, *Senhor Padre*,” she begged, “baptise me now; there may not be a next time, you know what happened to [so and so].”

Fernandes relented. He christened her on the condition that she temporarily separate from her husband until he passed the test and

could be christened as well. The woman took the name of Catarina, and Catarina became “a fervent Christian” (Fernandes 1932: 183–4).

The story shows that priests instilled the fear of God in these so-called pagans, who became desperate to convert to Christianity, lest they incur the wrath of the most powerful spirit of all—God—or much worse, lose the support of their white priest-sorcerer, whose power in the spirit realm was undeniable and who, without question, possessed power over the God-spirit like their own sorcerers possessed power over their spirits. To convert—to end up in the sky and not down in fiery hell, pagans had to jump through the priests’ hoops. The people were pressured, bribed and blackmailed to go to church, recite the commandments (without error), parrot prayers, confess their sins, make the sign of the cross (from left to right!), kiss hands (not the left one) and, as we will see later, surrender their sacred objects.

Duarte (1930: 367) may have been right when he proposed that Christianity was an “external varnish that rubs off at the slightest scratch”; Christians “dress, eat and live like other idolaters”.⁴ Even Fernandes (1927: 387) was inclined to distinguish between real Christians and ones that were “less assiduous”. Priests and nuns alike were perpetually haunted by the spectre that Christianity was acted out, not lived. So, it is not surprising that the clergy took solace in numbers: in the missionary year ending 1930, Timor had 5 churches, 24 chapels, 3 oratories, 25 parishes and 18,984 Christians (Fernandes 2016: 120). But it was Duarte, not Fernandes, who reminded the public that those 19,000 “Christians” in Portuguese Timor were among the 500,000 who were not.

Fernandes’ Ethnography

To rescue the Catholic Missions in Timor from secular damnation, Fernandes implored his readers to fathom the extremely trying circumstances that missionaries had confronted over the centuries. He was well aware that the early missionary Taveiro—whom he firmly believed was a Franciscan, not a Dominican—“did not describe the people of Timor in any detail”.

We can nevertheless reconstruct with considerable exactitude the primitive state [of the natives] at the time by inferring from current acts of savagery still practised in secret in the most remote kingdoms ... and especially those where the evangelising activities of missionaries have been less fruitful. I will thus

attempt to present an outline to the reader unfamiliar with the customs of this people.

So, Fernandes undertook the ethnography that Taveiro, in his day, could not have done. Unlike José Martinho's "ethnography of change" (see Chapter Four), Fernandes' ethnography had the quality of stasis: so that the reader could imagine the "baseness" and "depravity" of the customs of the 16th and 17th centuries, it was sufficient "to take a look around now, to observe the animalistic life, near-nudity, rampant promiscuity and incestuous proximity (as much by day as by night)" (p. 41).

Some things were so base that Fernandes could not bring himself to express them, graciously "sparing the reader knowledge of the kind of dialogues that take place every day at the commander's office, who must resolve disputes over situations worthy of animals, which the victims describe with a brazenness that outrages even the most desensitised European". The "alcohol that flows endlessly from palm trees" made the natives all the more "brutish"; they were incorrigibly lazy, "working only when hunger or need obliges them to, and hence they are fundamentally immoral" (p. 43). "The absence of abstract concepts" in their "mutually unintelligible languages" made matters worse, the priest bewailed, since "Portuguese terms had to be introduced to explain the Christian doctrine". To do so, the linguistic expertise of missionaries cannot be underestimated, for of all colonials in Timor, they were the most proficient in the local languages; they wrote the dictionaries (for example, Tetum-Portuguese, Galoli-Portuguese), and they (who else?) translated catechism into Tetum, Mambai, Makassae, Galoli, and so on (pp. 96-7).

Fernandes opined that the Timorese had "no religion as such": "All their religiosity can be summed up as 'fear of spirits'". The simple "fear of spirits" induced them to make animal sacrifices to dead relatives. To avoid the wrath of spirits "whose revenge would extend to the whole family", the people would "ensure the maximum number of sacrifices" (p. 44). Burials, he said, were "accompanied by banquets in which libations constituted the main event and resulted in a filthy, wild and drunken celebration". He divided burial feasts into two categories of emotional expression, which "are as opposite as they are comic":

During this interminable meal, the guests sometimes struggle to their feet, stagger over to the honoured mortal remains and

prostrate themselves on the ground with great demonstrations of grief, giving their voices the intonation of weeping, while each one rehearses a lament that is supposed to prove his great pain and immeasurable affection for the deceased ... The expression of pain, that an outsider would be tempted to believe was truly sincere, is shown to be farcical when the mood is suddenly and miraculously transformed by people breaking out in hilarious jokes and loud guffaws (pp. 44-5).

The funeral was followed by an orgy that could last two weeks or more; Fernandes does not go into detail on the orgies and whether they were only festivities or if they also involved sex; either way, we can assume—or hope—that he did not participate.

Fernandes drew a connection between the “terror the spirits instil” in the Timorese and “the respect with which they conserve any object used by the ancestors, above all the ancestors’ katanas, spears, and betel containers, the bamboo receptacles where they kept areca and lime, the mats on which they slept etcetera etcetera”. All the “objects of idolatry”, the priest said, were kept in the sacred house or in their dwellings. Fernandes therefore distinguished between the “domestic *luliks*” and the “*luliks* of the kingdom”; the latter were housed in a place only the *makai lulik* or “sorcerer” could enter and make sacrifices. Now, Fernandes uses his “fear logic” to undertake a theoretical leap from ancestors’ belongings to natural phenomena. Implying again the a-historical stasis that linked Taveiro’s time to his own, he says:

The same cult was, and still is, projected onto objects whose unusual shape catches their eye: an enormous rock, an extraordinarily large tree, a round stone, a thick wood ... all of which incite sufficient fear for them to be catalogued alongside sacred things, which they do not dare to touch or get close to, except for the *makai lulik*, who has the distinction of being the only one who can enter the sacred house, and who is consulted in all the difficult cases, particularly serious illness (p. 46).

Projecting the present back to the past, Fernandes could tell what the early “emissaries of Jesus Christ” had to withstand. So, Fernandes’ next question applied to all missionaries of all time: “How much effort was needed to transform such sensuality into purity, to extirpate so much superstition, and in its place implant faith, to bring to an end the natives’ innate egoistic brutality and make Christian charity germinate?” And his answer: “This is a superhuman task that only a

Catholic missionary, with divine help, can bring to fruition" (p. 48). Were Catholic missionaries really "superhuman"? one might ask. Surely Fernandes exaggerated? I believe not. The Timorese saw the priests as they saw their own "sorcerers": both possessed extraordinary powers.

Superhuman Missionaries

In his *Timor*, Teófilo Duarte (1930: 367) cautioned the state "to keep a close watch over the missionaries"; missionaries were thieves, who took advantage of the Timorese more ruthlessly than even their own sorcerers would do. Not in his wildest dreams could Fernandes have imagined that the source of the prestige and power of sorcerers in Timorese society could be comparable—homologous—to the prestige and power of priests. So, when Fernandes went to great lengths to substantiate how the prestige of good priests and of evil sorcerers were antithetical, he felt that he was putting Duarte's statement to rest, forever. In fact, by refuting Duarte, he was playing into the ex-governor's hands (and mine).

For Fernandes, missionaries possessed a certain power that government officials or military men lacked. There were times when "the mere presence of a Christian was sufficient to restrain mutinous crowds, which the government forces could not subdue". Fernandes cites the assassination of Governor Maia (1887), which had been provoked by the excesses of the Secretary General. After the murder, the Secretary took refuge in the Lahane Mission, to where "the natives ran, thirsty for his blood". At the gate, they asked the Superior, Father Gomes Ferreira, if the Secretary was hiding there. "Conscious of his own charisma", Father Gomes answered: "Yes, he is here, but you will have him over my dead body." He ordered the crowd to withdraw "and they obeyed him". Then it was necessary to have the Secretary board a boat in the harbour. "What the armed forces would have done with difficulty, Father Gomes did alone," Fernandes wrote. Gomes openly crossed the rebel lines, with the Secretary at his side, and put him on board "without a peep from the rebels, not even the slightest breach of the respect that the missionary has always inspired" (Fernandes 2016: 75).

Fernandes offers more examples of priestly power. In 1897, the people of Manufahi were mutinous, "but attacking them with arms ran the risk of drawing neighbouring kingdoms into the conflict". Instead, Father Antunes penetrated the mob and convinced the *liurai* to surrender. Governor Filomeno da Câmara urgently called

on an equally “providential man” when Manufahi was rebelling again in 1912. The governor’s troops, Fernandes explains, could only launch an offensive against Manufahi by retaining the key ally of Suro. But Suro was on the verge of being co-opted by Manufahi’s powerful potentate. A missionary, whose very “*presence* could prevent a danger of such proportions” was dispatched to Suro [emphasis added]. In another case, a missionary was taken to a rebel hideout. After persuading the rebels to turn themselves in, the missionary returned to camp “without a scratch”. In yet another case, the military commander of Maubara had lost authority over his own force of Timorese soldiers, so Câmara enlisted a missionary to lead the forces to Maubisse (p. 78). After victory in the War of Manufahi, Câmara reputedly stated: “If Timor belongs to Portugal, it is because of me!” Fernandes could affirm “without a lie that had it not been for missionaries, Câmara would not have been able to pronounce those words” (p. 80).

These anecdotes were not invented; they were based on testimony and reports (which may have succumbed to hyperbole—see Teixeira 1939: 209.) Collectively, the anecdotes point to a suspicious aura of unassailability about missionaries. Fernandes, despite his faith, understood prestige and power in secular terms; but for the Timorese, prestige and power had always been related to the sacred realm. Fernandes, in my view, correctly identified the effect but misunderstood the cause when he stated:

Respect and veneration are so deeply rooted in the native’s heart ... that ... there is not a Timorese who does not instinctively reach out his hand for the missionary’s blessing if he passes one. The native’s love for the missionary manifests in one thousand and one instances, especially *when hunger, sickness and injustice knock at his door*. At these times, the missionary is the refuge, the confidant, the advisor, the doctor and oftentimes the lawyer before the authorities (Fernandes 2016: 81) [emphasis added].

Here, almost in passing, Fernandes indicates that missionaries were useful to the Timorese in times of crisis, and we can see that their service bears some overlap with that of the “sorcerers”, namely the ritual priests and healers who were available for consultation precisely when hunger, sickness and injustice knocked at the door. These men—“sorcerers”—always charged a fee, but Duarte claimed that missionaries charged even more (Duarte 1930: 367). Fernandes balked

at Duarte's unjust remark. Unlike sorcerers, who were paid in animals, missionaries generally charged nothing for weddings, baptisms and burials. "In the face of this slander hurled at the missionaries of Timor by a man who was at the head of the government of this colony, I can only pray: 'Forgive him, Lord, for he knows not what he says'" (Fernandes 2016: 81). Maybe Duarte does not need forgiveness after all; maybe priests were also paid in kind, in various ways, including for services that the priesthood could never articulate, not in their wildest confession.

State versus Clergy: Refutations and Affirmations

We can imagine Fernandes' anguish when he read the following on page 367, the most incriminating page of Duarte's *Timor*: "The missionary doesn't teach him to improve the cultivation of his coffee or corn, he doesn't teach him the use of better technology, he doesn't treat his illnesses any better than a sorcerer would do, in sum, he can't offer the Timorese any material advantages" (Fernandes 2016: 136). Missionaries could not even handle a pair of pliers, let alone build a church; they couldn't even "apply a bandage, and only barely remembered how to apply tincture of iodine", Duarte's (1930: 369) merciless tirade persisted. Students of theology, Fernandes snapped back, spent three years studying practical medicine. Far from recoiling from a simple dressing, they dared "to perform delicate operations when the life of a patient was at stake". He cites three "extraordinary cases" of missionaries curing young males, two of whom had fallen out of trees and had been carried to Soibada Mission for surgery. "A native cured by missionaries" reads the caption to a photograph of a long scar on the abdomen of a topless adolescent. (No photograph appears of the boy upon whose testicle the squeamish Fernandes operated) (Fernandes 2016: 134–8).

If Duarte (1930: 369) had highlighted the "deficient preparation with which the students of Sernache come to the colony", Fernandes, whose memory never failed him, summoned testimony against a Duarte whose memory evidently did. One evening in 1926, Duarte hurriedly ascended the mountain to Dare and dismounted at the entry of the college. He offered the head missionary of that institution the position of Director of Colonial Development. "A missionary whose cultural level, in the current opinion of Duarte, does not go beyond his being a stupid and swindling sorcerer," Fernandes

ejaculated, "had been chosen by Duarte himself to be Director of Development" (Fernandes 2016: 142).

When Duarte was governor (1926–29), his appreciation of the missions was very different to how they appeared in his *Timor*, Fernandes chided. If Duarte (1930: 369) ran down the infrastructural accomplishments of missionaries, Fernandes curtly reminded him that at least five churches had been constructed under the direction of missionaries (Fernandes 2016: 134–7). If Duarte pointed to deep discord between missionaries and military commanders, Fernandes countered that the presence of missionaries alone created harmony between commanders and natives, and disharmony prevailed in the missionaries' absence (p. 154). If Duarte claimed that the clergy had committed abuses that had to be dealt with by the state, Fernandes retorted that the missions had their own impeccable disciplinary system for punishing offenders. If Duarte declared that "no institution escaped the wave of corruption and the Catholic Missions themselves were not spared the sick tradition of lust and concupiscence dating back more than 100 years", Fernandes spat back that "the ex-governor was viciously defaming the austerity and virtuosity of the missions". "Where did D. get his information from?" (p. 153).

Missionaries, Duarte had claimed, failed to help natives to improve their agriculture, or deliver to the Timorese "any material advantages" (p. 136). Fernandes devoted most of one chapter of *Missões de Timor* to fighting off this accusation (pp. 87–97). A notable example was the extension of Lahane to Dare under Medeiros, where the construction of new classrooms and dormitories meant that native students could go up and "take lessons in agriculture on the farm that encircled the college", which instilled in them a "proper work ethic" (pp. 87, 94). Naturally, the farm provided food for staff and students. But it was also interwoven with the broader colonial pursuit of plantation development that began during the pacification years. Fernandes reminded his readers that for at least three decades, the clergy had been sourcing, importing, trialling and distributing different varieties of coffee, cacao, tea, quinine and other cash crops (p. 88).

Fernandes was armed with a second line of defence. The priest was surely alluding to Duarte when he said that "for the blind, anything that is not planting coconut trees or building new roads is not colonising" (p. 157). "Unfortunately," Fernandes hissed, "some do not appreciate this because their narrow-minded secularism does

not allow them to see what more lucid people see" (p. 157). It was not through material means that the first Portuguese missionaries won over the colony of Timor, Fernandes declared. To this effect, he singled out the catechism, which was more important than agriculture. Even more important was the love that lay behind catechism, and, most important of all, was the missionary that lay behind love. There was no love in coffee, coconuts and corn, and certainly not in an ex-governor like Duarte.

Missionary Love, Catechism, Civilising, Patriotism and the State

Fernandes was emphatic: "To capture the natives' heart by the ties of love is the first step of colonisation." Giving "love to the people penetrates their hearts, and so their pacification is guaranteed" (p. 157). Fernandes found many different ways to say that to christianise was to civilise, and that catechism and love were those things which most directly undermined barbarism (p. 158). Catechising missionaries civilised more than "armies equipped with all the weapons of death" and religion was "a powerful bind tying the natives in a mystical body of which the *priest is chief*; and by attaching the natives to the priest, they are also tied to the Mother Country, which these people instinctively love, as if it were their own" [emphasis added].

For Fernandes, this love for the mother country was particularly significant because the Timorese were "born warriors", whose most sacred objects were weapons, namely the katanas and spears of their ancestors. Since their superstitions persuaded them that, after certain ceremonies, they became invulnerable in war, they went to war without any fear. Now, according to the priest's logic, "to convert a native is to dispossess him of all his bellicose instruments inherited from his elders, which he should relinquish before his christening, since they only encourage idolatry". So, Fernandes could aver that "a kingdom converted is a kingdom disarmed" (cf. Bovensiepen and Rosa 2016). To prove the point he needed to look no further back into history than 1912 when, in the War of Manufahi, "no kingdom that had a missionary presence fought against us; on the contrary, those were the ones that fought by our side". So, Fernandes declared: "How poorly informed are secularists who wish to suppress the activity of missionaries, whose presence makes them uncomfortable, defamatorily affirming that priests only teach prayer!" (Fernandes 2016: 160).

On page 161 of *Missões de Timor* we see a photograph of a large group of school children on horseback, led by a Father. The caption reads: "The pupils of Soibada on their way to the exams." The photograph alone countered the injurious claim that missionaries only taught children to pray. They "do much more than that", Fernandes spurted, insisting that missionaries deserved full credit for whatever education existed in Timor (pp. 163, 170). Missionaries had always been teachers, from the time of their arrival to the present time when there were 1,529 students, about two thirds of whom were in mission schools (as opposed to state schools) (pp. 163, 168).

Fernandes presents a list of 23 *liurai* (some already dead) who had been educated in the boarding schools of the missions. I dare say that Fernandes was right when he stated that to be a Christian ruler was to fight alongside the Portuguese in the War of Manufahi (pp. 170–4). (Twelfth on the list is Dom Francisco da Costa, the *liurai* of Ossú, whom the reader met in Chapter Four.) Another list showcased the 21 children (still alive) of *liurai* who had been educated in the missions (p. 174). Fernandes presents yet another list of 22 indigenous chiefs educated in missions, who occupied offices as captains, military-post chiefs, secretaries and *suco* chiefs (p. 175). Then comes the final list of nine teachers employed in state schools but educated in the missions. *Missões de Timor* would have exceeded the capacity of the printer had Fernandes attempted the "interminable list", that is, all the names of native telegraph linesmen, nurses, scribes of commanders, interpreters, enforcement officers, court clerks and functionaries of the Postal Service, Public Works, Development, Customs and other state departments. After the missionaries themselves, all of these Portuguese-speaking natives were "the principal driver of civilisation", said Fernandes, quietly denigrating the efficiency of the secular state (p. 176).

Girls on Boats, Sex, Marriage, Family, Education and True Love

Fernandes was sincerely preoccupied by the moral impact missionaries made on their young female converts. He offers his readers a shining example of "the marvellous result the good [Canossian] Sisters produced in the spirit of their students".

Some students of the Sisters were returning home to Oecusse by boat. Among them, one stood out for her natural beauty,

which aroused a European. Thinking that the morals of those girls were equal to those of other Timorese without the light of faith, he took it for granted that he could satisfy his animal instincts ... He vainly attempted his brutish, violent assault, but quickly realised his mistake because the victim, despite her slender form, possessed a manly spirit worthy of a ... Christian heroine. For this reason, she preferred to die to losing her virginity, so she threw herself overboard (p. 72).

The story stood as proof that "the virtuous Sisters" delivered natives from beastly sexuality. "Blessed is the faith in Jesus Christ, which brings about such miracles," the priest rejoiced (p. 72). (Fernandes does not mention that the girl was rescued by sailors—Teixeira 1939: 207.)

There were 200 native girl pupils living in the Canossians' boarding colleges in Dare, Manatuto and Soibada, apart from those in the regular schools in Dili, Laleia and Baucau. Fernandes knew as well as the nuns did that "ideas innate to the heart of a barbarous people are not easily extracted". He was saddened by the fact that Timorese "women are not human entities with rights equal to men, but a domestic object, a property intended for maximum profit" (Fernandes 2016: 181). Fathers, Fernandes said, raised their daughters "for their market value, and for this reason they are given to the highest bidder" such that they were "cruelly condemned to union in a marriage that they never chose and often detested".

Because men paid "a good price" for the women—a price that increased in proportion to the degree of relatedness to a "royal family"—"to lose a wife is to lose a fortune" (p. 181). Hence, priests faced difficulties in "dissolving extra, illicit unions among Christians and converting pagans living in polygamy". In other words, even Christians who were supposed to have just one spouse, may have had additional pagan wives whom they would not easily relinquish; polygamous pagan men, furthermore, could not convert, much less receive a Christian marriage, without dropping their extra wives. When exhorted to leave wife number two, or two and three, and so on, Fernandes always heard the same response: "I can't leave her, because she cost me so dearly" (p. 182). Since chiefs of royal lineages were, for their wealth, those most likely to have more than one wife, and since priests were most intent on Christianising royal lineages, we can imagine that missionaries often struggled at this intersection of two marriage systems. (Page 79 of Fernandes' book displays a photograph of the Christian family of a *liurai*.)

Underlying the economics posed a question of morality. Concubinage and adultery, Fernandes realised, rarely implied "the dishonour for the female prevaricator that they implied in the civilised world". The situation was simply dealt with by imposing a monetary fine, paid to the offended husband. After payment, the female prevaricator became, "in the eyes of men" (but, Fernandes insinuates, not in the eyes of God), cleansed of all shame. This gave Fernandes a ready explanation for "the ease with which a girl or woman falls into the arms of a seducer". The house architecture exacerbated the problem, for Timorese homes were "so small that fathers and daughters live night and day in astonishing promiscuity". For Fernandes, Catholicism's greatest challenge was to inculcate into the native women the notion of modesty, the love of honour, and purity of action—in short, "to change the woman's heart" (p. 182).

Fernandes recommended that priests focus their work on "both constitutive elements of the family" so the couple become educated in the same sentiments. Said Fernandes, "the efforts of the Church would be wasted" if those people be allowed to mix with individuals who held different sentiments. In practice, this meant that Christian converts be kept separate from pagans. In turn, this meant nothing less than building "a new society", made up of families whose heads should be "raised by priests and nuns in an environment of purity", after which they would "come together in nurturing ties of matrimony and raise children imbibed in the sound maxims of the Gospel" (p. 182).

In 1910, Fernandes reports, Father Sebastião left behind in Samoro a nucleus of such families in which "pagan rites and scandalous, animalistic behaviour" had been eliminated. Resources, however, were clearly lacking for building and monitoring new Christian settlements. More common would have been the strategy that Fernandes describes next, namely keeping the girls in the college until they married, thus preventing the exposure of their "natural fragility" to the "pagan environment". The woman could then "deliberate calmly" and freely accept or refuse the "good catch" presented to her, accepting someone as her spouse "by following the guidance of her religious precepts, her education and her heart". Fernandes knew that this "benefit" could only be extended to a limited number of female students, but what counted was the "quality of the fruit" (p. 185). If, despite the Christian control, females "strayed from the dignified path", Fernandes blamed "those

white men" who had forgotten their civilising responsibility; *those* white men were, without a doubt, secularists (p. 186).

In a final note that was evidently not included in the leaflet that was delivered to the Portuguese Colonial Exhibition in Paris, Fernandes admits that his patriotism had obliged him to paint a rosier picture than that which he would have otherwise presented, hiding truths—"bad cases of girls going astray", presumably—that would rile many an observer of the Catholic Missions of Timor—and had seemed to rile ex-governor Teófilo Duarte. "Dirty laundry is washed at home," Fernandes apologised (p. 187). It is hard to know exactly what Fernandes meant by "dirty laundry", but the point is that *Missões de Timor*, like all ethnography, was as much about omission as it was about exhibition.

Disarming the Kingdoms

In Chapter Two it was revealed that in 1883 Henry Forbes heard a story about a priest who barged inside a sacred house to seize the sacra. As he did so, the sacred weapons, wielded by the invisible hands of a spirit, jumped up and attacked him, while the sacred rock bounced around the interior threateningly. The priest bolted out of the house and ran away. Although such a merciless approach to what Fernandes called "disarming the kingdoms" is likely to have continued in the 20th century, the accounts of missionaries at least suggest a kindlier, carefully measured, approach. Between 1924 and 1929, for example, Fernandes used to pay regular visits to the kingdom of Lacluta, where he managed to establish a catechist. By 1927, Lacluta had "21 pagans learning the doctrine" and some of them, Fernandes reported, had "already turned in their *luliks* consisting of a true arsenal—spears, katanas and diverse trinkets" (Fernandes 1927: 388–9). Usually, it was necessary to surrender these items prior to baptism.

The letters penned by a contemporary of Fernandes, Father Ezequiel Pascoal, illustrate the missionary fervour that lay behind "*lulik* harvests". One day in a village of Lacló, Pascoal was on his way to deliver the last rites to a sick man when he passed a small house. The house's "peculiar form" told him that there were *luliks* inside. His suspicion was confirmed when he spotted a pair of large drums whose old age indicated to him that they must be *lulik*. Pascoal planned to enter the house and "dethrone" the *lulik*. But "on second

thoughts it seemed that such an approach would not be prudent without first gaining the sympathy of the people". At the time, he only got so far as to speak to "the guardian of the *luliks*", a skeletal man who politely barred Pascoal's entry to the house. Pascoal tried to make the man change his mind about the value of the *luliks* by advising him that he prepare himself for an imminent death which would not be pretty unless he became a Christian. (Surely, he spoke of hell, fire and eternal damnation.) The man "laughed with such sarcasm that it seemed to be the laugh of the devil himself".

Two years later, Pascoal learned that the old man had "died in the darkness of the superstitions that surrounded him". Pascoal then went back to the house, but this time with a number of chiefs. With their support, he was able to topple the *lulik* of the kingdom: "We threw out everything—an endless number of things full of dust and smoke, all of which were absolutely worthless except for the *lulik* value that the natives attribute to them." The *lulik* itself, Pascoal continued, was "a golden object the shape of a crescent", amidst an array of other objects such as "a sword, a spear and many baskets". Pascoal and the chiefs carried the confiscated *luliks* over to the chapel, where they built a fire and burned everything, including the two drums.

From this, one would assume that the replacement "guardian of the house" lacked the strength or conviction to prevent the priest and his support team entering the house and taking its contents. Pascoal continues:

In Manatuto a *lulik* was handed in to me as well, on January 13, after the well-attended Mass, which is celebrated every month in honour of Our Lady of Fatima. The wife of a chief was dying. She didn't want to leave this world without persuading her husband to turn in a *lulik* that he kept hidden and which was the *lulik* of the whole village (Pascoal 1937: 847–8).

Bringing the first case of the *lulik* of Lacló to bear on the second one of Manatuto, it would seem likely that Pascoal had convinced the dying woman that she would not ascend to heaven without her husband relinquishing the *lulik*.

Pascoal imparts another illuminating story that he penned in 1936. The Canossian Sisters were in the habit of visiting villages in order "to entice women and children to the teachings and the practice of their religious duties". The previous year, in 1935, during

the three days of prayer—the triduum—that preceded the festivities of Our Lady of Fatima, the Sisters insisted to the people of one village that they could only carry out their religious duties if they turned in their *luliks*. The people refused. One discouraged nun withdrew to sit under the shade of a tree “to reflect on the blindness of the natives” and pray to Our Lady of Fatima “to soften their obstinate hearts”. (No mention of the nun’s obstinate heart.) When the Timorese noticed her sadness, they brought her food. The Sister shunned it, telling them that “her only wish was that they convert to the faith and give up their *luliks*”. Apparently Our Lady of Fatima answered her prayer, for “a few moments later they gave her a *lulik* plate of yellow metal, and some swords”. After that, the Sisters acquired “a piece of stick more than one metre in length, tied to which were some red old rags”, which was a snake. In this tale, we notice the pressure the nun put on the local people to bring their *luliks* to her. (It is conceivable that the nun sat down under the shadiest tree she could find, which could have been a sacred banyan tree; seeing this, the people would have had all the more reason to bring her an offering, and the one she wanted, in this expression of transformative animism.)

The following year, on 13 May 1936, which fell on the same three days of the triduum immediately preceding the same festivities, “the Sisters believed that Our Lady of Fatima would come to their assistance again”, so they repeated their search for the *luliks* in “the deeply superstitious village of Obrato”. The Sisters, Pascoal wrote, were again successful, managing to have the people turn over a famous *lulik* called Loi-ata. The same day, Pascoal said, he and his fellow priests were handed an equally famous *lulik* called Macan-laic, which was “nothing less than the mother or father of Loi-ata”. “The interesting thing is,” wrote Pascoal, “that it was also delivered to us during triduum” (Pascoal 1936b: 282).

Like Pascoal, I too find it interesting. That the natives handed in *luliks* during one year’s triduum and did so again in two different places during the triduum the following year, suggests a double-ritualistic character to the rendition of the sacra. Pascoal found it interesting because behind this “coincidence” he distinguished divine intervention. In contrast, I find it interesting because what the priests and nuns saw as a Christian observance, the local people saw as an expanded animistic one; the Timorese must have recognised in the successive days of intense Catholic prayer (the triduum) something uncannily similar to their own rituals. As an extension of that ritual

logic, *luliks* became offerings to white “sorcerers” or *nai lulik* who were not dissimilar to their own *nai lulik*. “The *luliks* are one of the main things that tie these people to the yoke of the devil,” Pascoal believed (p. 282). I contend, rather, that the *luliks* were beginning to tie these people to the yoke of the Catholic priests and nuns. Paganism, so to speak, was sucking Christianity into its rationale.

An unlikely piece of testimony penned by Father Sebastião Aparício da Silva (1908) is even more telling. In that Father’s estimation, the Mission of Soibada operated in the most promising Christendom of the whole island “given the frequency of sacraments”. It was here that “the fear of God manifested in the native men, and even more so in the women, many of whom had been influenced by the kindness of the four Canossian nuns (two Portuguese, two Filipino). Father Sebastião had been teaching a group of catechists (converted natives and teachers of catechism) who taught catechism to a larger number of catechumens (advanced students and Christian converts under instruction prior to baptism) who, in turn, presided over an even larger pool of still-unconverted native men. Classes ran for up to eight hours a day, and a few hundred metres away the Canossian Sisters ran similar classes for women who “seemed to have responded to God’s call”.

The focus of Father Sebastião’s story now shifts to some “very high mountains” flanking Soibada where “quite a few people lived”. The place had no Christians until the Canossian Sisters christened one girl. After that, Father Sebastião enrolled some sons of important chiefs from those villages into the Jesuit school, while the Canossians did likewise for their daughters. The parents of the boys and girls lost their fear of the foreigner priests when they found their children dressed in European costume and nicely treated. By and by, more natives converted, frequented mass and, “with our help, some built a village near Soibada from where many came to the house to study catechism”. Allow me to quote at length part of Father Sebastião’s exhilarating letter to the Bishop:

Having agreed with our new native Christians to visit their mountains, I went there on 21 May [of 1908]. With me went one missionary and 34 of the elder students. And *what an impressive celebration they gave considering they are such a poor people!* A buffalo was slaughtered ... and even though it was meant only for those of us who came up from the valley, there was enough to feed all the hungry mouths. After the feast, we

proceeded to tackle the task at hand, the most courageous that this people could possibly undertake. All of us—men and women, Christians and pagans—went to burn down the huts that they use as pagodas or chapels, full of pagan idols [referring to sacred houses or *uma lulik*]. Knowing how fixated the Timorese are on their pagan convictions, I understood the importance of this, and consider this endeavour to be one of the most heroic that they could ever perform with the missionary's encouragement [emphasis added].

Now, Father Sebastião backtracks, explaining that this was not something that he “undertook lightly, nor without considerable prudence” and preparation.

First I had taught the native Christians, even during catechism, to loathe their diabolical ceremonies; and it became evident that they all showed their preparedness to burn the huts *so long as I was with them*, since they *would not do it by themselves*. After the chiefs and their wives were baptised and had received a Christian marriage, I told them to speak to their pagan brothers, and mainly to the sorcerers or people in charge of such idols, and only then did I venture up to the mountains.

On the day of my arrival, the main chief introduced me to these guardians of the idols, who delivered quite weird speeches and held ceremonies when they wanted to make something happen, the poor men! After the introductions, I gave a short sermon, and they replied that I could burn everything without their becoming angry. It was raining, but we still went and set fire to nine [sacred] huts, six in one spot and three others. As the fire devoured them, I used it as an example to preach to them, then and there, about hell. All the Christians assembled in the hut where the native students from Soibada were staying; we prayed the rosary and sang the litany of Our Lady, concluding with a prayer.

The next day they listened to the mass. After that, nearly all the students and the other missionary went back to Soibada, leaving me there with half-a-dozen students to burn more places of idol worship as well as baptise infants with the permission of their parents, who although still pagan were ready to come to learn the doctrine in order to become Christians. *I went around to various places throwing out their pagan objects and undoing curses and those people, with God's mercy, showed such faith that it was enough for me to go to such places to make the devil flee and trouble them no more.* There was just one place to which I didn't

go, sending instead some students there; they reported that *the devil of the place was so enraged that the people living there had never found a moment's peace* ... On the last day I baptised 29 little boys and girls. I marked a place for a hut to be built to serve as a church, and I will go there ... to celebrate mass on Sundays and to preach to those pitiful people.

There was one thing about the whole affair that delighted me. One man who attends the catechism in our house, a man who is still a pagan (as is the woman with whom he cohabits and who is also learning catechism with the Sisters), was the one who led us to the places of idolatry, alongside another who is not yet a catechumen but is eager to become a Christian. *Such are the people here—docile, simple and easy to instruct in our holy religion.* This work was a great success with the manifest help from God. At the end we took a photograph of the ten sorcerers [*pomaleiros*]. I use the term “pomaleiro” because “pomal” has already entered the Portuguese language and currently refers to those objects of idolatry. To each of the *pomaleiros* who were photographed, I gave alms, leaving more alms for the ones I missed.

Later I returned to that mountain area ... The people were as excited to see me as they had been the first time. I went to the place *where they believed the devil still remained*, but I didn't find him. It was enough ... to go there in person to convince them that the place could no longer cause them any harm. Fire was set to three huts; another one had to be knocked down, but not burned because it was close to their dwellings and I was afraid they would catch fire. All this took place in two different villages, and in both all the people affirmed that they only wanted to have God on their side and go to heaven. They promised us they would come down from the mountains to learn the holy doctrine in order to be baptised. Let us pray to Our Lord for this people who offer such good prospects (Silva 1908: 192–4) [emphasis added].

The author reveals a ceremonial aspect to the burning operation, since it was evidently preceded by a buffalo sacrifice and a large feast. Father Sebastião's presence was, moreover, of key significance, although he may not have known that he was participating in what must have been a “pagan ritual”. Next, the ten sorcerers were easy to win over, so why? My interpretation is that they were unable to get a handle on a certain malevolent spirit, and at tether's end, they trusted their friendly, white sorcerer to achieve what they had failed

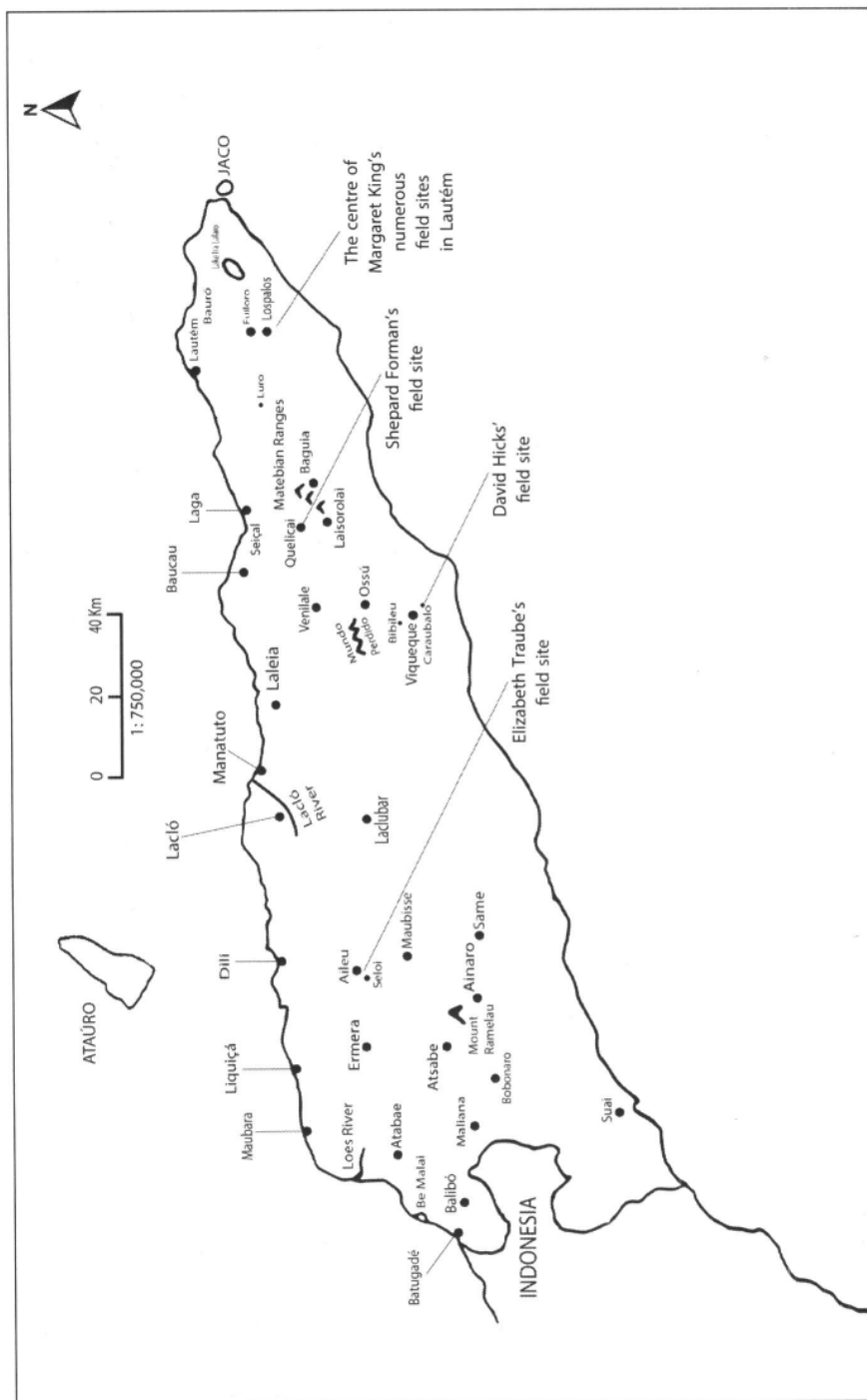
to achieve with all their offerings. So, what was for Father Sebastião “the devil” was for the “sorcerers” an annoyed spirit that they no longer dared to confront alone. This would also explain why the students would not attack the sacred houses without their Catholic priest-accomplice; they did not need his moral support, much less his pleasant company; instead, they needed his power. It is impossible to believe that those who lived in the mountains held that Father Sebastião was helping to save their souls for God; their induction to Christianity was too recent for that. Instead, this priest was saving them from what is likely to have been one of their own ancestors. They were, then, not so much “docile”, as Father Sebastião had put it, as they were *desperate*. One might wonder about what particular ill this spirit inflicted upon them; probably hunger (at this pre-harvest conjuncture), but also sickness and death for these adversities, invariably attributed to spirits, struck most parts of Timor periodically; more and more sacrifices may not only have been ineffective but may have “reduced them to poverty”; the new head tax of 1906–08 (or the prospect of its imminent collection) could hardly have helped. (The tax may even have been interpreted as a consequence of the wrath of their own spirit or of the Father himself.) Father Sebastião, in any case, had thought that the devil had left after his intervention; but the people believed he still remained; spirits, arguably, do not go away, they just change their behaviour when induced to do so with offerings; if adversity persists, then the spirit continues to blight them.

We know that Fernandes, like the other priests, went around collecting *lulik* objects, but we do not know whether burning sacred houses was on his agenda. In a way it doesn't matter. What matters is that priests and nuns exerted a power that was homologous to or even identical with the power of what the Portuguese called *feiticeiros*—sorcerers. The Portuguese priests thought all along that it was for their God's grace that the Timorese became receptive to them. I would argue instead that their receptivity had developed out of their vain attempts to get a hold on their own spirit(s). When local people noticed that the white priests were fearless in the face of their dead ancestors, they became convinced that the stranger-priests fulfilled the selection criteria for the job, perhaps even more so than their own “sorcerers”—*dato lulik*, *nai lulik* or *makai lulik*. At least in part, this was what baptism and conversion were about; the local people's attraction to and reliance on a greater animistic power embodied in the priest figure—not his secular prestige.

Fernandes was perhaps too blinded by his own religious convictions to see that Duarte's culturalist interpretation was quite right. If Fernandes (2016: 71) had said that the missionaries "tore the inhabitants from their superstitions and brought them out into the light of civilisation", one could counter that Catholics, without even realising it, were torn out of their Christianity and brought into the light of paganism. In Part Two of this book we go on to meet four foreign field anthropologists who entered Portuguese Timor in the 1960s and 1970s; the sharp distinction they would draw between Christianity and animism was, perhaps, not so sharp.

PART II

Professional Ethnography



Map 4 Portuguese Timor: places identified in the anthropology of Part II

7

The Sentimentalist (An ethnography in Paradise)

British-Australian ethnologist Margaret King landed in Baucau early in the dry season of 1960 to commence her research on Timorese music. King grew so fascinated by the Timorese people and customs that she returned for a second visit to the island the following year, at the height of the wet season. "Timor is an enigma which only slowly stands revealed", wrote King (1963a: 29) in her coquettish narrative of her adventures, *Eden to Paradise*, published in 1963. While King acknowledged that the book was not an anthropological treatise for specialists, her involvement with the South Australian Museum and the local community of ethnologists means that it can well be placed midway between professional anthropological writing and travel writing for a popular readership. Indeed, King's book helps us to appreciate the close relationship between the two genres. As travel writing, *Eden to Paradise* made imperialism available, meaningful and desirable for Europeans "at home", giving ordinary people a place in the imperial system (Pratt 2008: 3); as anthropology, King was able to draw on and popularise scientific expertise. If King's initial purpose was to explore music, she ultimately intended "to lift the veil on a little known island" for general readers (King 1963a: 7); two other papers would be reserved for specialists (King 1963b, 1965).

Evidently, what King found most intriguing in her newfound Eden was *lulik*. At first, she confessed, *lulik* "seemed a term of little importance". Eventually, she came to perceive that "this belief in *lulik*, compounded partly of ancestor worship, partly of spiritism,

penetrates every corner of Timorese existence" (p. 150). But, she asked, did this "*lulic* cult" qualify as religion?

If we can accept a definition of the word "religion" as being essentially something of mind, body, spirit, controlling our actions through the equivalent belief, awe or reverence, obedience; if we assume this belief, awe or reverence, obedience to be directed at some power termed "god", which in turn represents what we believe to be necessary for our welfare and survival, then it is accurate to record the belief of *lulic* as the religion of the Timorese (p. 150).

King's reasoning is interesting, for it suggests a structural parallel between *lulik* and God, between animism and Christianity, against a backdrop of universal human needs and vulnerabilities. In any case, King's gradual unveiling of *lulik* accompanies tales of her trips across the half-island. She rode in jeeps, was chaperoned by administrators and, at one point, the governor. With an interpreter always at her side, she would stay and dine in administrators' homes. Although King appreciated the "generous spontaneity of friendship" from the Timorese, nobody so impressed her as did the Portuguese, who "laboured hard in Timor as a service to humanity" (pp. 8, 41).

Eden to Paradise hints at the ethnological tradition of cultural diffusionism, by which King notices correlations and points to possible connections between Timor and other parts of Asia-Pacific (pp. 153–4). Yet one suspects that this and similar themes remain undeveloped because she resists telling the object of study as removed from experience and travel. Oddly, then, King barely thought to ask why the Timorese were so receptive to her and her research, but she did say this much: "The Timorese are, by nature, thoughtful and polite, but it has since occurred to me, when considering their anxiety to assist me, that they were probably equally as absorbed in studying me as I was in studying them; a fair exchange" (p. 173). Nevertheless, *Eden to Paradise* offers ample clues as to the source of that Timorese anxiety and absorption in her; the Timorese were not dealing with an everyday visitor, but a stranger with airs of power, evidence of which emerges continuously in the stories King tells of receptions in her honour, her privileged access to rituals, her invitations to the banquets of wealthy chiefs ("capital L" Liurai), and everyday encounters with ordinary Timorese who even saw King as a *lulik* personage in her own right! If King perceived awe, reverence and obedience projected through the notion of *lulik*, she herself seems

to have been the focal point of a similar, homologous, projection of awe, reverence and obedience.

Eloquently framed around theatrical metaphors, *Eden to Paradise* is divided into two parts. Part One reflects on her "Voyage of Discovery", consisting of nine chapters, the first being "The Curtain Rises". King takes her readers exploring different parts of the colony in what presents as an exciting travel diary. Part Two follows King's "Journey of Investigation", in which an equal number of chapters corresponds to such matters as people, landscapes, dance, crafts, laws, customs and, inevitably, the powers of *lulik*. By the time "The Curtain Falls", it is clear that the author's experiences in Timor have made a tremendous impression on her, just as she has on Timor.

Performance Animism

Margaret King was met at the airfield by the affable Administrator of Baucau, Senhor Francisco Menezes. In his hand he held a welcoming message from the governor and an invitation for her to visit him in Dili. For now, however, Menezes and King would take the jeep directly to Laga to celebrate the birthday of a local administrator. En route, King was immediately struck by the "bare, bleak plain" that stretched out before them, and the magnificent spiked peaks of the Matebian Ranges in the background.

The administrator's residence at Laga shared a hilltop with the fort, and overlooked the Wetar Strait. As the party sat on the veranda that evening, King surveyed her companions and marvelled at what an international gathering they were: "Senhor Menezes and Father Brito, both Goanese; the Secretary of Baucau and his wife, Senhor and Senhora Prata, white Portuguese; the doctor, Dr. Remedios, born in Macau, his wife in Lisbon; the *Chefe* and his very young wife, a mixture of several races." King paused to reflect that "the ideals of Portugal, expressed 400 years ago by Alphonse de Albuquerque, had been realised", and she quotes him:

Colonies are not mere possessions to be exploited, together with their native inhabitants, for the advantage of the colonising power. They are to be regarded as extensions of Portugal, and ... those who live in them, whatever their colour, should feel and believe themselves to be Portuguese; enjoying the same traditions and governed by the same constitutions. In such a conception, colour is nothing more than an accident (p. 32).

The Lusotropical veneer of racial democracy would keep King good company throughout her travel.¹

After one night in Laga and another in Baucau, the next event drew King to a luncheon at the house of the chief of Venilale, a Liurai called Ximenes. She might have been expecting his to be a hut of thatch, for upon arriving there she was amazed at the size of the house: "an imposing building" of stone with a tile roof, a wide veranda and gardens all around. She was equally amazed at the chief's prosperity: Senhor Menezes met her surprise remarking that the chief "could buy and sell [him] many times, so extensive [were] his possessions" (p. 35).

The thought that "Timorese social stratification" had been "the handmaiden of Portuguese colonialism", as Shepard Forman (1980: 342n11) would later put it (see Chapter Nine), could not possibly have gained entry to King's Lusotropical imagination. Instead, more tangible things lured her attention. After remarking the sheer size of the chief's large fish-breeding tank (this wealthy group of *liurai* had long been the first to benefit from development initiatives), King found herself in the vestibule beholding "two magnificent elephant tusks" mounted on a fine wooden stand. She ventured a query about their provenance. Alas, the chief "had lost the thread of his family history". King sensed his sadness when he said the gift had been made "long, long, long ago" (King 1963a: 36). Had King read *Flores de Coral* (2004: 473–4), she may have recalled that Alberto Osório de Castro's party on the peak of Gugulêur (in Maubara) had photographed a sacred (*lulik*) elephant's tusk (Chapter Three); and from Armando Pinto Correia's *Gentio de Timor* (1934: 60–1), she would have learned that sacred objects had, decades ago, been pillaged from sacred houses and entered into mercantilist relations. The elephant tusks in which King was now engrossed had likely passed from being sacred potencies to secular status symbols.

King lingered on the subject of wealthy chiefs long enough to remark that buffalo were a "form of currency" in the "marriage contract", and that one chief had set his price at 140 buffalo for his daughter. She "doubted the girl worth it, for looks anyway", although for the girl's proud lineage, she supposed that the young husband "consoled himself by frequent glances at the family tree" (King 1963a: 38). King lauded the "wise legislation" that set limits on the number of buffalo slaughtered in such festivities, thus ending "the tragic vicious spiral of indiscriminate killing for prestige purposes" (p. 165).

Quelicalai was the next destination. There, King saw her first monkey. But the sighting of her first red-headed Timorese was rather more riveting (p. 39). (For the reader curious to know what the monkey might have had in common with the redhead, King reassures her readers "there is not the slightest connection between the two!") As we saw in Chapter Three, the anomaly of Timor's "red-haired race" had long intrigued ethnographers who vacillated between racial and cultural, historical and mythical explanations. King's rediscovery of red hair appeared in the context of a rice dance, which, the reader can be fairly sure, the local people staged for the benefit of their most eminent visitor.

To watch the slow chain formation of a rice dance convert itself into a swaying circle is a fascinating sight. The men, hands cross-clasped, move in a series of four steps forwards and backwards, their bodies swaying strongly to the rhythm of the singing, then facing to the centre, they jump high into the air before beginning the slow swaying movement once more. The lilting rhythm of the song with its solo and chorus verses of improvised topicality is enchanting, infecting with its gaiety listener and performer alike² (pp. 39–40).

King suddenly realised "with a shock" that the dance leader's "violently-nodding" bamboo headdress concealed bright red hair "in a crew cut!" She threw a question at the administrator, whose only reply was that he was the chief's son and there could be "no doubt about [his] paternity".

King was left to decipher the cryptic response as she fixed her gaze on a procession of Timorese women winding their way up the hillside. More conscious of the clock than the Timorese could have been, she excused the women's tardiness, intuiting that they needed to make a "very complete *toilette* in honour of their visitor".

Softly they came, quietly swaying, to the plateau where the dancers were standing, gentle eyes shining in anticipation of the admiration they knew would be theirs. Admiration for the beautifully woven [dress] of bright colours, for their smooth and glowing skins, for their gleaming hair dressed with jewelled pins which winked and sparkled in the sun (p. 40).

King knew very well that the women—and no doubt the men too—relished the attention she bestowed on them, which was no ordinary person's attention. King's attention intensified when more

redheads among the women's group came into view, when she began to distinguish carrot reds from lighter, almost fair, reds, and in particular when she, from close-up, detected freckles as well. As soon as she raised her camera, she discovered that the Timorese manifested "ham-like qualities in their mental makeup" for they "dearly loved to be photographed" (p. 40). King did not consider that she and her camera were accomplices in the "ham-like" complexion of her photographic subjects. If there was animism in this performance, it was the self-conscious animism of being looked upon by a prestigious outsider.

To the extent that her treatise was not a scientific one, King could afford what only a creative writer could do, namely to explore anthropomorphism as a literary device. She painted banyan trees as "personalities in their own right" and, on that count, to "assign them their important role in the religious rituals and beliefs within the clans seemed entirely reasonable" (p. 38). She thus prepares readers for her next experience in Dili, where a group of musicians and dancers, having just sailed across in their boats from Ataúro Island, set up their drums and gongs in "a clearing of ground under three huge spreading banyan trees". However much the dance and music impressed her, it "seemed to go on for ever" (p. 47). We have already learned from previous ethnographies that outsiders found Timorese festivities to be insufferably long. On such occasions, there may have been a simple misunderstanding: indigenous performers would not close a performance while a distinguished guest looked on, while the same guest, especially one of British extraction, would not act so discourteously as to withdraw until such a time as the show had reached its proper conclusion. Timor, evidently, punctuated time and expectation differently.

As sailors, the Ataúroans were "almost a race apart". King did not, of course, regard them literally as "descendants of sharks", as they regarded themselves, but thanks to their belief they had "no fear of sharks when swimming". She found most remarkable their "strong and distinctive personal odour", and she discovered to her detriment that "it was a simple matter to identify [one] merely by standing downwind". Leaving aside a serious discussion of totemism, she joked that only for their smell could these islanders swim unharmed among sharks (pp. 47-8).

King was less bewitched by the elaborately costumed Dili dancers, who paraded in honour of the 500th anniversary of Henry the Navigator. Their "whooping extrovert" dancing betrayed "less

artistic integrity" and lacked "ritual significance"; the tambours and gongs, moreover, held a "monotonous rhythm, mechanical in its repetition" (p. 49). She does not care to mention that this performance was staged following the codes and schedules of the Portuguese, a kind of colonial appropriation of custom and highly ritualistic in its own right. But we do learn where King was seated; she was not under the banyan trees but up on the balcony of the governor's palace, overlooking the festivities—a balcony that elevated King's own standing for the mere fact of sitting on it. In the large square below

were the armed forces of Portugal on service in the island, and behind, flanked by the sea, the native chiefs and their contingents, gay pennants fluttering from the saddle pommels of horses whose heads were crowned with brilliant plumes of feathers ... In contrast to the utilitarian guns and carriages of Western origin, deadly but dull in appearance, the native chiefs of each *Suco*, resplendent in ceremonial clothing, were focal points of brilliance worthy of the excitement they created. Many wore great circles of gold suspended from their necks and foreheads and their gold armbands gleamed in the sun. Others boasted feathered head-dresses which bobbed and nodded as, mounted on horses equally splendid in appearance, they were followed by warriors almost as richly dressed. So the gaily-caparisoned groups passed the saluting base, each proudly bearing the red and green flag of Portugal, bright patches of colour remarkable even in this brilliant setting ... The Governor, Senhor Themudo Barata, took the salute (p. 50).

A "long discussion with the Governor" resulted in an itinerary that would take King to various places west of Dili, ending up in Be Malai for "a special ceremony" (p. 32). The significance of this itinerary will be pointed out later, suffice to foreshadow here that the timing of the special ceremony—which was in fact an indigenous ritual—seemed to be adjusted to suit the schedule of special guests.

The *Lulik* King (1)

King travelled to Ermera with the Administrator of Ermera and his wife, Senhor and Senhora Ribeiro Filipe. Ermera would hold many surprises for King: The area "had so much to offer that during the evening, in friendly conversation with Senhor and Senhora Filipe,

I laughingly suggested that Ermera possessed all the attributes of Eden—magnificent scenery, equable climate, prosperity from the great coffee and rubber plantations, and strawberries!” (p. 55). The following day, after a tour of the plantations, the Filipenes introduced King to Father Ezequiel Pasquale [*sic*], the local parish priest. That evening, Father Pasquale and Margaret “sat for hours in animated conversation” as they discovered “a mutual interest” in ethnology (p. 57). Then, in fact, was her first introduction to “the cult of the *lulic*”. Among the many stories she heard was one of a native chief whose wife had been snapped away by a crocodile. But when people commiserated over his loss, the chief replied that he felt “greatly honoured”, for obviously his “ancestor so approved of [his] choice of wife that he took her for himself”. “I can always get another wife,” the chief said. That was “quite a philosophical way of looking at matters incapable of alteration,” thought King (p. 58).³

At Atsabe, after King had reunited with the governor and his party, all were welcomed by the Eagle Dance, “an exquisite pattern of movement” that thankfully drew to a close before she could remark on its excessive length. She would receive a “lovely silver necklace as a parting gift” (p. 60). She did not reflect on what the gift might have meant to the givers—silver necklaces are often *lulik* (Hicks 2015: 26) and, I would say, anything less than a *lulik* gift would have been deemed a discourtesy for the stately figure of King. Bobonaro then “beckoned”, and King continued on with the governor across the “ocean of mountains”, the peaks of Cablaque, Cailaco and Darulau pointing “menacing fingers of warning at us ... against a darkening skyline” (King 1963a: 60).

The company was put up by Bobonaro’s district administrator. This man, King reported, possessed great knowledge of “Timorese mental processes”; his “summary of the problems connected with the arduous task of encouraging them to reach a higher standard of living was succinct and enlightening”. In short, the Timorese lacked a concept of work as well as a vision of the kind of rosier future hard work would deliver. The point was illustrated when the governor’s party chanced upon a native who, ignoring his coconut plantation, gazed idly at the “deep blue sky” while chewing betel nut. Admonished by the administrator for not working, and advised that in years to come he would reap the benefits of his labour if he applied himself now, the native “waggled one big toe”, and replied: “But I’m resting” (pp. 61–2). King professed an appreciation for the depth of the challenge facing colonials in their Timor mission.

The ominous menacing fingers of the peaks of Cablaque, Cailaco and Darulau had evidently been read correctly. It was only after two near-fatal accidents—one had brakes failing and a jeep teetering on a cliff-top, saved only from plunging into the chasm below by the weight of King's camera equipment in the backseat—that they arrived, shaken, at Be Malai. Translated as "Foreign Water", Be Malai was "an estuary of very great beauty", remarked King, before recounting the legend concerning its origins:

There were once, so they say, two men, one, a man of Atabai, and the other, a man from Balibo. They met to consider the boundary line between the two groups of people but, as they could not decide the matter amicably, they fell to fighting with staves. While they were fighting a very old woman came along, carrying on her head a large cooking-pot full of water. The man from Balibo struck her on the head with his staff, which broke in two as the pot was smashed and the water flowed away, to become the salt-water estuary known as Be-Malai (p. 68).

King witnessed the ritual ceremonies that kept the legend alive. First a female buffalo was sacrificed by the insertion of a ceremonial sword through her vaginal passage and beyond the small intestine (p. 152). A man standing at the water's edge was then symbolically sacrificed by a blow from behind, upon which he feigned death and was immediately wrapped in fishing net. (King maintains that in the olden days a real human sacrifice took place.)⁴ A pig was placed near him, its heart stabbed and its blood offered to the water. Then a flotilla of fishing boats set out from the shore while hundreds more natives waded in the shallows, "dancing violently, shouting and singing with delight". The boatmen informed her that all this served to stir up the mud and make the fish drunk. "Whether the fish do become drunk," King quipped, "is a moot point, but most certainly the smell of the mud would asphyxiate anything" (p. 69). Clearly, King had a sensitive nose.

After the ceremony, King strolled along the estuarine shore (p. 70). All of a sudden, she heard a plop at her feet. Glancing down, she discovered a fish: a barracuda that had been hastily discarded by the fisherman who caught it. King continues:

I picked up the wriggling fish to examine it more closely, and was astonished at the reaction of the fisherman, for a combination of awe and fear was very apparent in his face. It must be admitted



Photo 7.1 Margaret King holding a *lulik* barracuda at Be Malai, August 1960.
© Mia Stephens, image courtesy of the State Library of South Australia

that the fish was armed with remarkably efficient teeth, but I was holding it in such a way that it could not snap at my hand—although it made many efforts to do so. This particular type of fish is very much feared by some groups of Timorese who regard it as sacred [*lulik*]. My innocently *casual* way of handling the fish *tended to place me in the same category*. They were jubilant because they felt sure *their fishing would now be doubly successful* (p. 71) [emphasis added].

It would seem that King, like spirits, wielded power over the fishing catch, a power only confirmed by the fact that she could *casually* hold the *lulik* fish in her hand long enough for somebody to take a photograph of them both. The contrast between emotional (if not completely frenzied) natives and the cool, calm and collected (rational) King is striking. But this is not to suggest that she was immune to bodily sensation—rather, sensation has its proper, measured place.

Measured emotions are illustrated precisely in the next instance when the hot and dusty King happily agreed to be taken to Fatu Sue

for a refreshing dip in the sea. Due to the crocodiles lurking in the shallows, she was then warned not to enter the water, to which her valiant response was "the crocodiles would have to look after themselves": "This attitude of mind seemed to confirm my position among the *lulic* as far as the Timorese were concerned." "But it was not braggadocio," King grasped at modesty, "it was sheer desperation, for dust and perspiration are uncomfortable fellow-travellers." King survived "a most exhilarating swim", and she felt that her "happiness was complete" as she retraced her steps back along the beach collecting shells in the fading light. Only upon arriving back at Be Malai did she discover that two swimmers had recently been taken by crocodiles at Fatu Sue (p. 71).

In yet another respect, King may have been more *lulik*—special and revered—than she realised. We learn in one of her scholarly articles, "Fishing Rites at Be-Malai, Portuguese Timor" (King 1965), that these ceremonies only took place every four years, on 29 and 30 August. These dates, explained King, "are governed by the appearance of dead or decaying fish and prawns floating in the water" since "the Timorese take [this] as a sign that the power of the *Lulic* (supernatural influence) in the water ... requires rejuvenation" to ensure "an abundant supply of fish". Given the presence of this sign, King continued, the ritual master (*rai lulik*) had advanced the dates to 19 and 20 August. The question is whether King said as much to retain the "cultural authenticity" of the timing for the sake of a scientific report that was meant to be about an indigenous ritual, and not about outsiders' influence on it. I would suggest, in contrast, that the ritual had been scheduled (or rescheduled) to permit the spectatorship of Governor Themudo Barata and his most important guest, Senhora King. Their itinerary, after all, had been planned well in advance, and the ceremonies of Be Malai had been placed on the official agenda (King 1965: 110–1, 116). Spirits could be summoned anytime, but it was not everyday that such distinguished "others"—at least as distinguished as the spirits themselves—could be summoned. Ruy Cinatti (1965: 38–9) seems to confirm this interpretation. From him we learn that invitations to the governors, alongside "select members of the civil and military Administration", were a routine event every *two* years: "His presence, celebrated upon arrival with marches, drums and ovations, is very pleasing to the Timorese, since he represents the highest political category that they can possibly conceive of."

The *Lulik* King (2)

Margaret King took a light plane from Maliana to Dili and another from there to Baucau, from where she travelled overland to Viqueque. A certain Senhor Teles, the Administrator of Lospalos, was in Viqueque to greet her, and this man would gain so favourably upon her that she dedicated a paragraph of her diary to his gentle idealism, kindness of spirit and strength of character. Happily, Senhor Teles also had a "remarkably attractive voice" (King 1963a: 76). King then remarked how, for the beauty of the Viqueque women, "the average man" could easily "lose his head completely" over them (p. 77). What rather compromised their feminine beauty was the red betel that stained red their "pearly white teeth"; with more time in Timor she would come to see that the "pretty young ones" would soon become "haggard and aged" after bearing a couple of children (p. 182).

King's first day in Viqueque would see her taking photographs until the last twilight. Parades and spectacles preceded "a final evening celebration of dancing, singing and gambling". Also present were some American and Australian oilmen, whose attempts to participate were so comical that they provoked "undisguised glee" among the Timorese. Then the old war chant, the *loroçá*, drifted into King's awareness. She was reminded that the Timorese, while "gentle" by nature, also harboured "a distinctly bloodthirsty side". This, King had learned, could be traced back to a favourite old "sport" in which the men went off "to collect the head of a neighbour". "Not that there was any skill or finesse in the collection," reckoned King, confident that the principal goal was "to catch the other man off guard and decapitate him".⁵ (Subsequent scholars have never pursued King's original line of enquiry.) With the *loroçá* suffusing the night air, "the whole scene had a fantastic, dreamlike quality", and she sensed that she would always be haunted by its "strange beauty" (pp. 78–9).

King continued on with Senhor Teles to his home in Lautém. By the time they entered the township of Lospalos, she was "still sublimely unaware of the real importance of this area to [her] future", although she intuited that she had "unwittingly, stumbled upon Paradise" (p. 84). "The following few days passed in an enchanted idyll of peace and beauty such as [she] had often imagined experiencing, but never hoped to achieve in reality" (p. 86). Enigmas layered upon mysteries, and "intriguing questions bubbled in [her] mind". She felt that "the surface of investigation could barely be scratched in four days"; she would need at least four years. However, she resigned herself to leaving this "isolated enchantment" (p. 90).

Once in Dili, King sat disconsolate under a banyan tree, dreamily playing native melodies on a bamboo flute. Then, unexpectedly, two more flutes joined in. Melodies mingled as two native boys appeared from around the sprawling trunk. "All three"—Margaret and the boys—"stood regarding each other in gentle inquiry." King then noticed an elderly man at the rear. Buckled with age, his feet bare, his gnarled hands clutching a walking stick, he exuded "an air of authority distinctively his own" (p. 94). After much deliberation, recounts King,

he assumed me to be a Timorese—the blue eyes being explained by the fact that my parents crossed the ocean just before I was born. Since Timorese women play only drums and gongs, and I could play the bamboo flute and, furthermore, had played it while under a banyan tree, he also came to the conclusion that I must be *lulic*, steadfastly maintaining this in spite of my denials of such status until, since it seemed discourteous to continually refute his belief, I finally accepted the compliment (p. 95).

This, of course, was not the first time King had been accorded what she now called the "*lulic* nationality".

Tidings from Australia announced that many of King's photographs had been over-exposed, thus obliging her to return to the east once more. Arriving first in Laisorolai, King met Bishop Goulart, who was to preside over a baptismal service scheduled in the little church of thatch. All around, "animist groups" had already commenced their dancing and singing, and so "these two ceremonial occasions existed side by side", observed King, once again puzzled that the Timorese did not demarcate more clearly between "the two religions". The sermon on the inside was penetrated by the rhythms of gongs and drums from the outside (p. 97).

King makes palpable the deep attachment that ethnographers typically have to their research agenda, for at this point events temporarily unfold contrary to her wishes. She "fumed silently" when plans to meet Senhor Teles at Laga were disrupted, and vociferously opposed the proposal she stay put for the night. The "dark and overcast" skies reflected her mood and, she confessed, her face "must have been a picture of conflicting emotions" (p. 98). But after consultation with her hosts, she felt "deep satisfaction in the knowledge that plans were once more moving smoothly". Her contentment soared when Laga "disappeared in a haze" behind her and Senhor Teles, on their way to Lospalos (p. 99).

King does not reveal too much about what happened in her final (she presumed) visit to Lospalos—"Paradise regained" reads as little more than a fleeting affair before returning to Baucau and boarding a flight bound for Australia. At Darwin airport, the "uncomfortable bustle and confusion" contrasted with the enchantment left behind (p. 101). So Margaret King concludes her "Voyage of Discovery" to resume her lecturing in Adelaide as an honorary ethnologist.

Exporting *Luliks* from Paradise

The chance for King to return to Timor came "by a series of bizarre and widely divergent happenings" (p. 101). We do learn, at least, that she formed a close friendship with a European professor, "deeply interested in the work" and eager to sponsor her on a "Journey of Investigation". At that professor's behest, the research trip would see her concentrate her efforts in Lautém for there "lay most promise ... to uncover much of importance" (p. 102). Little over four months had passed since she had left the island.

From Dili, King immediately headed eastwards in what was, during the wet season, "a very different Timor", not least for its swirling rivers, the navigation of which often assumed an adventurous highpoint in her narrative. Crossing the Lacló River, she was struck by the appearance of the proud old Residency dominating the east bank. It was now deserted. In the evening, seated at the dining table with the district administrator, Manuel Ferreira, and his wife, "conversation and laughter flowed freely" on "the supernatural beliefs of the Timorese". Manuel Ferreira recounted "many fascinating stories for which no rational explanation could be found". About the old Residency, King listened "enthralled to stories of hurried movements, shouts, muffled orders, scufflings, inexplicable thumps and bangs, all without apparent source and all graphically described" (p. 110). Since King longed to witness this spooky scenario for herself, one wonders whether her fear of the supernatural kept her from paying a visit to the haunted house that very night, before departing for Quelicai and Laisorolai the next morning. Further east, the Seiçal River proved even more testing than the Lacló had been. For two days they sat stranded on the west bank, which produced a "defeated and desultory" Timorese driver who "looked as if he had forgotten to pay adequate respects to his ancestors"; King considered a personal appeal to the spirits of Matebian to guide them over the raging torrent (pp. 111-4).

King's Journey of Investigation was a sufficiently serious mission for her to harbour anxieties about cultural impurities. "Racial integration," King worried, had made the situation "an anthropological nightmare." Although she saw customs passing away everywhere, Lautém, at least, held out the hope of locating an authentic cultural heritage (p. 160). King therefore had every reason to explore the meaning of *lulik*. The term *lulik*, she discovered, could be used as a noun, an adjective or a verb, yet "irrespective of its form ... the force and power of suggestion of the word to these people is undeniable" (p. 155).

Particular attention needs to be paid to the noun-form of *lulik*, for King adopted a specifically Portuguese way of understanding the term. The Portuguese in Timor had long been speaking, writing and laughing about *os Lulics*. For them, these typically represented the invisible "nature spirits" that inhabited the land. But the substantive *luliks* also applied to sculpted or crafted figurines that guarded sacred places as well as *lulik* objects that had historically been kept in sacred houses; this rendering of *lulik* had its roots in the missionary view of *lulik* as an idolatrous and fetishistic cult (Hicks 2004: 26). In mimicking colonial usage, the *luliks* epitomised, for King, Timor's spiritual, yet tangible, essence.

Tangible Timor had the great advantage of being a collectable one, and here we need to consider that on her second Journey, King sought not only information, recordings, photographs and footage but, following the instruction of the European professor, also objects. Herein we detect a subtext in *Eden to Paradise*, one that could easily have remained submerged but for King's grateful acknowledgement of "the efficient staff in Customs and Quarantine of Darwin and Adelaide who wrestled so nobly with the fantastic collection of strange objects for the museums and universities" (King 1963a: 8).

This leads one to wonder at the hidden efficiencies of King's material collections, since *Eden to Paradise* tells nothing of the means of *lulik* appropriation. How did King manage to procure the "ancestral mask" which appears on the front cover of *Eden to Paradise*, and on account of which she is thankful to a certain Peter Medlen for his "excellent studio photograph" thereof? (p. 8). And what of the human-torso *lulik* drum, whose discovery was "not a fable after all" (p. 134), but whose likely export from Paradise—alongside other ancestral figures (which had obviously been cleaned to be photographed and meticulously presented on pages 98–100) we learn nothing about? As invisible as the Timorese spirits themselves are the

intercultural politics that made King's collection of *luliks* possible in the first place. How was "the fantastic collection" negotiated? Did Senhor Teles—who kept King's company during the better part of the Journey of Investigation—intervene on her behalf? We may also wonder whether the quasi-*lulik* quality of King's persona was implicated in her taking of the sacra, and whether her appropriation of *lulik* was seen through Timorese eyes as an offering to her—an offering of awe, reverence, obedience, perhaps? None of this fits in *Eden to Paradise*. King's romantic narrative was averse to the discussion of non-Lusotropical politics, and this extended de rigueur to the interpersonal politics of collecting.

King's omissions may have reflected anthropology's increasing discomfort with the taking of "material culture". Historically, collecting indigenous artefacts for museums had been a mainstay of colonial ethnography (Osterhammel 2014: 11–14), yet the practice was now slipping out of professional anthropology; King was caught between these two currents. Perhaps this explains why the singular mask mentioned in the published version of *Eden to Paradise* had been *masks* (plural) in a draft manuscript⁶; and only by way of a report published in *Taminga* do we discover that King "was able to acquire ... five *lulic* dancing masks fashioned from timber" (King 1963b: 27).

When King (1963a: 134) saw "quite by chance the human-torso *lulic* drum of Timor" carved from the trunk of a palm, and when this turned out to be, not a fable "but a true and exciting fact", we might pause to consider that she was excited for more reasons than those admitted by her description—the small arms that extended from its sides and the "rudimentary penis and navel" decorating its middle. These small arms, penis and navel were all part of the attraction to an object that might become "hers". The drum figure, "carved from the butt of a large palm", was "supremely aware of its own importance", said King, in an odd, anthropomorphised mirroring of how important the drum figure would *personally* become as a member of her collection. It was "worthy of the significantly grave role which [these drums] play in the lives of the people, for they never speak except on matters of urgency or danger concerning the entire *Suco*, or as the sombre accompaniment to the Songs of Death" (p. 134).

King was able to listen to—and of course record—that instrumental accompaniment to the Songs of Death following the

Photo 7.2 Margaret King prepares her exhibition at the South Australian Museum following the publication of her book, *Eden to Paradise*, in 1963. © Mia Stephens, image courtesy of the State Library of South Australia



Photo 7.3 Margaret King's exhibition at the South Australian Museum. The placard reads: "Artifacts collected by Margaret King, author and ethno-musicologist, during her field work in Portuguese Timor". © Mia Stephens, image courtesy of the State Library of South Australia

death of an elderly chief in a village near Lospalos. She attended part of the burial ceremonies staged over two months, a period commensurate with the status of the chief, she wrote. She described the process whereby the mourners were required to extol the virtues of the life of the deceased, recount clan histories and direct his spirit to return with "all possible haste" to become an Avô or ancestral spirit (pp. 136–7).

We sat listening intently while the sounds of grief and memory echoed round us in the warm night air; spiralling curves of melody old as time itself, telling in duet form of the old man's love of children, his skill in asking riddles, his kindness and sense of humour and, most of all, his wisdom in matters of *Lulic* ... and always the voices urged the spirit not to delay but to "Go now, go away, leave us, do not stay with us".

King held that the Songs of Death were critically important for recording the history of illiterate and literature-less people, enabling them to "retain an accurate memory of the intricate stories connected with the lives of their ancestors" (p. 137). She recognised the great pride the Timorese took in chanting and versifying, averring that these "probably constitute[d] the greatest test of prestige within the community and ... [were] decisive in the election to [ritual priest and witchdoctor]" (p. 138).⁷ This category of people, for King, were not criminals, crooks or charlatans, as they had been for colonial ethnographers; quite the contrary. "Culture" in King's ethnological tradition, was too sacred to be faulted.

Snakes, Redheads and *Luliks*

King commences her description of the ceremonial preparations for the sowing of rice around Lospalos with a caveat; in the western districts of Portuguese Timor as well as in Java, a couple would make love in the rice paddy prior to its sowing. In Lautém, however, there was no love-making. Instead, once the land was cleared the people "perform[ed] a *lulic* over the bare rice paddy": the women carried ashes in a coconut shell from the household hearths to the paddy; they sprinkled the ashes on the dry earth to ensure an abundant yield; in a long ceremony with singing, the eldest woman took the rice seed from the granary and passed it through the hands of the other high-ranking elders, before it was sown in the field where the seed would "spring to life" (p. 153).

Then, characteristically, King inserts herself into the animism she describes:

When it became apparent to these simple people that we were genuinely interested in the various beliefs connected with *lulic*, they told us many things of interest and value to our study and showed us many of their *lulic* shrines. As far as I was concerned, *this was an additional honour, since women are normally forbidden to approach these secluded areas* (p. 153) [emphasis added].

King's high-status, *lulik*-like personage disqualified her from the Timorese demarcations that would normally exclude women from certain sacred places. Clearly, the Timorese were dealing with a special person. That King was a *woman* of high position might have put her in a class all of her own, over and above the Portuguese men who, obviously, also treated King as a most distinguished visitor, even if, as we see below, King herself would paint *the occasion*, and not her *self*, as that which was special.

Another day, King and company went to a village further from Lospalos to seek out more *luliks*:

When we arrived at the entrance of the *povoação* [hamlet], the chief greeted us *with such obsequiousness* that it was speedily obvious *the occasion was exceedingly special*. Our interpreter, after long and earnest conversation, told us that we had arrived at the end of a sacrificial ceremony to install a new female *Lulic* in the grove we had seen on our first visit (p. 153) [emphasis added].

While we are left to imagine what that long and earnest conversation entailed, we can appreciate the great significance of King's visit for the local people. King, with *her* entourage, was soon on her way to said grove, during which time she learned that this newly carved female *lulik* installation had materialised after the chief's recent dream in which the male *lulik* begged for companionship. Arriving there, "the fires of sacrifice ... still smouldering", they stood under the shelter of the banyan tree contemplating the new *lulik* as she "stared back at us, her blue button eyes brilliantly unwinking, the sunlight filtered softly through the trees to fall across her reddish-brown wooden head, which was inclined slightly to one side in an attitude of interested attention" (p. 154). King, no less than the Timorese, gave this carved figurine the vitality, personality and perhaps even the appetite that made the coconut shells, rice, maize,

banana, betel nut, chicken and eggs placed on the stone altar at her feet very welcome offerings indeed. Could the entire occasion, in turn, be construed as an offering to King? (Was it coincidental that both King and the figurine had blue eyes?)

Among the banyan trees, King spotted more *luliks*, the most powerful of which was a large flat stone upon which lay a piece of disintegrating wood, "a visual *representation* of the Chief's *grandfather*—this term being used to describe a very remote ... ancestor" [emphasis added]. The timber was said to belong to the canoe in which he came to the island, and it was "so sacred to these people that its name [could not] be spoken, nor [could] it be known to anyone but the chief of the clan who at his deathbed [would] pass this information on to his eldest son". King neither probed for the ancestor's name nor thought twice about her term "representation". Nevertheless, she ascertained that at one stage in the history of the clan the wood had become so decrepit that it was replaced by a newer, similar piece. Then the chief at the time fell ill, twice. The witchdoctor (*matan dook*) was called in. Deep in trance, he perceived that the original grandfather-wood had to be reinstated. After that was done, the chief immediately recovered. King then asked the chief what would become of the clan when the original wood had completely rotted away. "We shall be no more," he whispered (pp. 154-5).

In the unrelenting "search for information connected with the *luliks*", Senhor Teles guided King to a number of burial sites. One site consisted of "great stone sarcophagi" with "impressive headstones" and burial poles "crowned by great skulls of buffalo, the immense spread of the horns indicative of the high degree of sacrifice involved". All of this was "so fantastic that [they] stood spellbound". Skulls and bones testified to the liberal sacrifice of animals, which "is absolutely essential, for without this the soul cannot find repose and the relatives, who are aware of this, have both a fear and a reverence for the departed spirit". It was "a discourtesy to offer less than the very best to the dead"; souls, after all, did not enjoy a real spiritual existence, King pointed out, "since beyond death all the same occupations, anxieties, necessities ... basic sentiments and instincts of earthly life" continued to apply (pp. 166-8).

"One discovery leapt upon another", wrote King, describing another gravestone she found along the north coast. Propped up against the burial pole was a bamboo ladder that extended skywards. The owner of the grave told King that the ladder enabled his ancestor to climb to heaven, or descend it to come back down to earth. This

figured as her sole "example of such escalator provision for spirits" (p. 168).

Elsewhere, between Fuiloro and Bauró, King was introduced to a "very beautiful spring of water surrounded by tall trees and flowering shrubs", "the water, falling over the begonia-studded rock face, disappear[ing] into a natural tunnel". This was "one of the loveliest of *lulic* places" and, she gathered, helped the people in times of distress. Troubled souls would clamber down the cliff to enter the tunnel, leaving their clothing at the entrance as a signal to others not to bother them in their "meditations with the *Lulic*" (p. 158).

On the day upon which we were taken to visit the spring a [sarong] and a wooden stave, resting in a neat pile near the entrance, were a deterrent which even the chief of the *Suco* observed with scrupulous care ... We had approached the entrance quietly, but moved away even more silently, hoping that whoever was unburdening his troubles would return to the surface restored and healed (p. 158).

Secretly, King may have been hoping to go inside the tunnel herself to share her sorrows—surely, even she had some.

Near Luro, a chief showed King "the strongest *lulic* of his family" (p. 156). From a nook in his dim abode, he extracted a carefully wrapped bundle. Reverent unfolding exposed "a stained and tattered cloth ... which proved to be a flag" bearing "at its centre a large red cross" beneath which King could discern:

Dada por Valenty Correã fíga TENENTE DEHES BEILOS a Phoupiçãõ [sic] de Luz, Jurdiçãõ [sic] de Same dada em Luro em 20 a Julio de 1693 annos.

[Given by Valenty Correã, Gentleman, Lieutenant Dehes Beilos to Phoupiçãõ de Luz, ruler of Same, given at Luro 20 July 1693] (p. 156).

Wrapped inside the flag was a booklet, "split with age" and barely legible (p. 157). This was a Roman Missal, published in Prague in 1660. King explained that the chief "did not himself understand the full significance nor the history behind the possession of these relics". She felt honoured because it was the "strongest family *lulic* and had never before been shown to any but senior male members of the family" (p. 157). It is unlikely that King wanted to take these particular European "relics" as museum pieces, however potent they might have been.

"The power of the *lulic* extends deep into the Timorese heart and mind, colouring his life with the depth of the belief," said King. She exemplified this through the story of a courageous man who had infiltrated the Japanese ranks at a time when the Timorese were helping a small contingent of Australian soldiers to hold out. Having discovered the infiltration, the Japanese pursued the Timorese through dense undergrowth and finally into a clearing. In desperation, an appeal was made to the ritual priest who enunciated ceremonially: *Let these evil men be blinded; if they think of us as mountains, let us be mountains; if they think of us as stones, let us be stones; let us be hidden and protected.* King's informant maintained that the Japanese soldiers passed the Timorese by without noticing them, seeing only piles of stones (p. 158; cf. Schulte Nordholt 1971: 335).

King eventually solved the mystery of the red-haired people. When such a redhead child is born, "the Timorese have a strange theory to account for [its] appearance": a small, green cobra called *akka* is able to change into human form, and he does so when he sees a woman with whom he wants sex, the result of which will be a red- or fair-headed child (King 1963a: 151).

We discussed the matter with a Timorese of high birth and standing in the community, and suggested to him that perhaps this belief would now only be current among the non-Christian section of the community. To our surprise he said that his sister-in-law could vouch for the existence of *akka* and his supernatural powers, since she had been one of his victims and borne an auburn-haired child. She solemnly believed the experience had occurred to her, detailing the specific occasion, and steadfastly defended her belief, although she was a devout Christian and came from a family equally devout, who had been converted for a very considerable time.

Everybody, King found out, lived in fear lest they too "be selected for the attentions of *akka*" (p. 151). King was struck by the co-presence of animism and Catholicism, as many ethnographers before her had been. One suspects that for the ordinary Timorese Christian-animist, nothing could be less remarkable.

Unanticipated Futures

King agonised over the inevitable. As she gazed over the "so very beautiful" landscape at Quelicai—the lush jungle, "the sheltered tiers

of rice paddies", "the modest little *palapa* houses" and the ponies trotting along—she pondered:

The whole scene had a timeless quality about it, serene and inviolable, which tore at my heart as I thought of the inevitable change in the way of life which mechanised civilisation would bring to these simple people. Would they be any happier? More content? Perhaps. I glanced over my left shoulder at [Mount] Mata Bian standing silent, her head wreathed in cloud. She gave no answer to my unspoken query (p. 41).

A story befitting the final chapter, "The Curtain Falls", is set in Larinacha. It was an idyllic, "gently hilled and gaily wooded" place, but the village itself was "full of death and decay". Only a trace remained of the "once vigorous community life" (p. 183). King came into conversation with the "old chief", and here we sense the strain between Paradise and Paradise Lost, between an old animist chief and a young secular one:

When the conversation [with the old chief] veered to the beliefs of his family, a sad apprehensive expression crossed his face and, glancing at the chief of the *Suco*, a somewhat bouncing and self-confident young man, I realised that he, scornfully impatient of these "old beliefs", was an inhibiting factor to the success of the conversation. I wished him a thousand miles away ... Seeking to draw the *Suco* chief's attention from the group, I moved away to study the carvings on the houses and photograph the graves. This ruse was successful, for, trying to cover both sites of activity at once, he could only hover on the perimeter of both, thus interfering with neither.

Left alone with Senhor Teles, the sympathetic understanding of this wise Administrator soon melted the old chief's suspicions, and realising our genuine interest he told of his beliefs and their importance to the lives of the members of his family.... As might be expected, they were completely bound up with the *lulic*. He told how, when one of his family became ill, he would carefully count 14 grains of rice and give them to the *lulic*. In return, he would be told who was responsible for creating the sickness and the reason for the indisposition. If the illness was very serious, a pig would be killed and the meat cooked in bamboo. This, he stressed, was most important, for his ancestors did not know the use of any other utensils for cooking. The first of this meat would, when cooked, be given to the *lulic*, and the rest distributed to all the members of his family ... So the pattern of life at

Larinacha unfolded, and it was very noticeable how strongly the accent fell upon disease, death, misfortune; the final stages of a way of life now threatened with extinction (pp. 183–4).

King's narrative reveals her own ambivalence: she mourns the death of "tradition" even though she knows it to be belief-bound and irrational; she celebrates the modern world and mechanisation, but she wants them well clear of *her* Paradise.

The loss of tradition in Timor parallels King's personal loss as she prepares to depart. After carefully packing the artefacts for "an interested European museum", King "unhappily" made her farewells (p. 187). Bothered by a premonition, perhaps, she left the island dispirited. The aeroplane gained height, Mundo Perdido "passed astern", and "slowly, inexorably, Timor wrapped herself in a blanket of cloud ... while the rough Timor Sea stretched below, grey, empty, desolate". Then, the solitary King noted that for the first time she knew what it meant to be alone (p. 188). Timor stood as a powerful symbol of her inner Mundo Perdido as she concluded her journey of investigation.

A decade after the publication of *Eden to Paradise*, King closely watched events unfold in East Timor: Portugal's sudden decision to decolonise, rising civil tensions between new political factions, a fleeting period of independence, all culminating in the Indonesian invasion of 7 December 1975. She became involved in the international East Timor solidarity movement, campaigning tirelessly for human rights and political justice, criticising Western policy and lambasting Australian hypocrisy. Margaret King returned to East Timor after its liberation in 1999. She reunited with some old friends who had survived, and supported a team of surgeons as part of the overseas aid effort.

8

The Theologian (An ethnography for order)

If one year stands out in the history of anthropology of Portuguese Timor, it is 1966. That was when six anthropologists—one British graduate student at Oxford and five French nationals—went to Timor for fieldwork. Had it not been for Portuguese Ruy Cinatti, this concentrated ethnographic activity would never have arisen. Cinatti had served in Timor as the governor's secretary (1946–47) and as the director of the Agriculture Department (1950–55). He took up anthropology at Oxford towards the end of the 1950s and soon enrolled in a doctoral programme. He went on to become the most prominent Portuguese exponent of culture-focused, relativistic European ethnology that barely existed inside Portugal at the time (see Cinatti 1965, 1987, 1996b; Cinatti and Oliveira 1973; Cinatti et al. 1987). Cinatti's advisory position with the Portuguese government's Overseas Research Board meant he guided official decisions on matters of research. Thus, the meeting between Cinatti and the first of the six aforementioned anthropologists, David Hicks, was providential. Hicks' supervisor, Rodney Needham, had already suggested Portuguese Timor as an ideal place to examine kinship and religion; Cinatti allowed that to happen (Castelo 2017: 5–10).

Portuguese Timor, wrote Hicks, was “a sensitive issue” given the colonial wars in Angola and Mozambique. The Portuguese government was very circumspect about permitting foreign researchers to access the colony even though, Hicks observed, Timor was calm. Hicks learned that Cinatti had advised the Portuguese government against permitting a certain American anthropologist to do fieldwork in Oecusse “because he might have been a CIA agent”. James Fox, who

was also at Oxford and twice sought Cinatti's support to study the Galoli, may have been tarred by the same brush. Hicks, in contrast, secured Cinatti's trust and friendship, and not long afterwards—in March 1966—he would be stepping off the plane onto Baucau's dusty airstrip (Castelo 2017: 8–9; Hicks 2017: 33–4).

Unbeknownst to Hicks, Cinatti had also arranged a French–Portuguese Ethnological Mission (1966/69–70); five anthropologists from France all arrived shortly after Hicks. For the first time ever, there was a sense that Timor's ethnolinguistic groups were being divvied up as area specialisations: the Tetum of Viqueque fell to Hicks; the Bunak of the western border area to Louis Berthe and Claudine Friedberg; the Kemak of Bobonaro to Brigitte Clamagirand; and in the east, the Fataluku of Lautém to Henri Campagnolo and Maria Olímpia Lameiras-Campagnolo.¹ While all six anthropologists shared a general interest in social structure, each had their distinct subject: the marriage system (at least initially) was to Hicks what myth was to Berthe, ethno-botany to Friedberg, the social structure of houses to Clamagirand, language structure to Campagnolo and weaving and pottery to Lameiras-Campagnolo. Given the marked comparative, structuralist and essentialistic thrust of the mission, none of the French team would ever tell much about their ethnographic encounter with animism.² For reasons which I explore below, Hicks turned out to be quite the opposite.

Hicks goes to Viqueque

Cinatti first drew Hicks' attention to Viqueque as a suitable field site for examining “the close relationship between kinship and religion” (Hicks 1976: 2, 2017: 34). Viqueque, Cinatti insisted, was the “least Westernised” district of Portuguese Timor, and it was the place where the “pagan religion” Hicks wished to study “still existed” among the predominant group, the eastern Tetum. Arriving in Viqueque and scoping out the surrounding *sukus*, however, Hicks was struck by the fact that “almost all Tetum were Christian whereas those who spoke the other languages [Cairui and Makassae] were all pagan”. If, initially, he had feared landing in snake-infested jungles, he now feared “returning to [his] university with empty notebooks” (Hicks 1976: 8–10).

Hicks soon gathered that the “more polygamous and pagan” Makassae people of the uplands had resisted acculturation and



Photo 8.1 Ruy Cinatti pays David Hicks a surprise visit. David (centre), Ruy (left) nursing the Hicks' son, Paul, and Administrator José Teles (in uniform). Viqueque, August 1966. © Maxine Hicks

Christianity by virtue of “difficult communications” and ethnic temperament (p. 54). If the reader is wondering why Hicks did not immediately leave Viqueque and settle among the Makassae instead, it was a condition of his research visa that he remain in Viqueque to study the Tetum. A couple of months had already gone by when Hicks heard that a few pagan Tetum-speaking villages remained in the *suku* of Bibileu, eight hours to the northwest on horseback.³ Bibileu appeared to be “isolated enough to have protected its ancient customs”, so Hicks enthusiastically accepted an invitation to accompany the census team to Bibileu. On 22 August 1966, Hicks was mounted on a horse, riding through the forest behind four census officials (pp. 8–10).⁴

Once in Bibileu, Hicks helped the officials with their routine questions—family constitution, place of residence, livestock numbers—and added a few of his own queries: “What is your religion? What language do you speak?” Gradually, Hicks came to the disheartening realisation that the Tetum-speaking folk of Bibileu were far more

Christianised than he had been given to believe. He opted to continue on with the census team to the other nine *sukus* in order to ascertain "just what the relationship between religion and language in the whole of [the subdistrict Viqueque] really was". The journey took two weeks. Finally, after having surveyed all 52 villages spread over ten *sukus*, it became clear to him that of the five predominately Tetum *sukus* in the subdistrict of Viqueque—Caraubalo, Uma Ua'in Craik, Balarauain, Uma Kik, and Bibileu—"it was not the last which was the most pagan, but the first". In fact, the very *suku* of Caraubalo where Hicks had begun his reconnaissance "came closer to [his] ideal" than the remote Bibileu; and of the six villages of Caraubalo, exclaimed Hicks dryly, "two of them actually had more pagans than Christians": Mamulak and Mane Hat. So, Hicks would establish his village study there (pp. 10–1).

Hicks' tour of the *sukus* is illuminating, for it shows how the ethnographer's search for a particular "ideal pagan Tetum" entailed selective travel and discriminating questioning in which religion and language served to gauge the level of acculturation. One could say that Hicks represented anthropology's longing for cultural purity where "cultures" were succumbing to Westernisation. If, for Hicks, anthropology owed it to posterity to record cultures before they disappeared, the immediate challenge was a methodological one: how to disentangle the Europeanised Timor (which did not require documenting) from the authentically Timorese Timor (which did) (pp. 2–3).

Disentangling the religions—the pagan from the Christian—was complicated by a second methodological trial, for once Hicks had extracted the content of "old religion", he found it to be irregular. Instead of "obvious clear-cut patterns of behaviour", Hicks found Tetum life to be "more disorganised"; instead of a cohesive community and consistent beliefs, he was met with individuals whose worldview varied; instead of a systematic cosmology concerning immortality, spirits and the destination of souls, Hicks found fractured and uncoordinated information; instead of rituals whose meaning participants could explain, he faced a dearth of "ritual exegesis"; instead of founding myths that were uniform, he detected contradictions. Hicks would convey a sense of *creating* structure to a religion where structure was really lacking: "The absence of a ready-made indigenous catechism forced me into what I consider to be a typical—though perhaps not readily acknowledged—role of the

ethnographer, that of ethnographic theologian" (Hicks 1976: 17, 2004: 21–4).

One must ask why he had been expecting religious "purity" and "order" in the first place. Hicks was convinced that what he was looking for—or hoping to find—was Tetum "religion". His preconception can be traced back to the work of French sociologist Émile Durkheim. Like many anthropologists who studied "the religion of non-literate societies", Hicks borrowed from *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1916) in which Durkheim had defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices" that coalesced into "a single moral community" (Hicks 1976: 20, 2004: 22, 25). If Hicks quickly realised that the disorderly Tetum "religion" did not correspond to Durkheim's notion of religious orderliness, he nevertheless endorsed Durkheim's basic premise of what religion meant by adopting a series of demarcations between empirical and non-empirical, visible and invisible, worldly and otherworldly, natural and supernatural, scientific and religious. In effect, Hicks projected a Western, Cartesian metaphysics onto the subject matter. Once he had subjected his data to the theological ordering that he felt the theological disorder in the field demanded of him, he ended up with a Tetum religion that was structurally commensurate with Durkheim's classic, functionalist definition of religion, portraying a cosmos neatly divided into the realm of "the secular" and "the sacred".

Increasingly, 20th-century ethnographers would seek out endogenous terms to validate their inevitably foreign theoretical framework, thus lending ethnography the air of an authoritative translation. While Hicks could not specify a Tetum term for religion and would resist calling *lulik* itself a religion (as Margaret King and many others had done), he was able to arrive at a number of key equivalences between Tetum and English concepts. In spatial terms, the secular, surface world of living kin was expressed substantively as "earth" (*rai*), while the subterranean world of ghosts was expressed as "underworld" (*rai laran*). In qualitative terms, *lulik* corresponded adjectivally to "sacred", "set apart" or "prohibited", while *sa'un* (or *sau*) meant to "make secular", "lift a prohibition" or "exempt" (Hicks 1976: 20, 2004: 27).

Hicks applied theoretical developments in structural anthropology to concoct a matrix of pairs that represented "an ordered system of ideas" making up the "cosmic whole", encompassing "the secular" (A) and "the sacred" (B) domains. The Tetum Binary Matrix consisted of 11 binary pairs (Hicks 1976: 108):

Tetum Binary Matrix

<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>
human beings	ancestral ghosts
secular	sacred
secular world	sacred world
above	below
men	women
right	left
superior	inferior
wife-givers	wife-takers
aristocrats	commoners
secular authority	sacred authority
elder brother	younger brother

The pairs represented the Tetum people's deep thought patterns that systematised their worldview and lent order to the cosmos. Influenced by the new symbolic anthropology—in particular Victor Turner's *The Forest of Symbols* (1967)—Hicks (1976: 106) stated that "any single binary contrast [could] symbolise the other". This methodological flexibility conferred on Hicks considerable narrative freedom to associate Tetum symbols; any given pair could stand in for another.

All of this had a greater sociological purpose for the study of the Tetum. Hicks posited that cosmic and social harmony was maintained when the binary categories were stable and when the contents of the categories were held in their proper "oppositional categories" (p. 108). A "category" had to be "clearly defined" and "eligible for either Column A or Column B"; if something "defied classification" it equalled "a mental monster which must be tamed" (p. 110). The "system of categories", Hicks added, was "continually imperilled by the threat of chaos", including sickness and death. Chaos, for Hicks, was typically registered as "anomalous happenings", which the Tetum attributed to spirit forces of the underworld wreaking havoc in the secular world (pp. 109–10; cf. Schulte Nordholt 1971: 75–6). Chaos or potential chaos, in turn, highlighted the critical importance of ritual in the lives of the Tetum. "Rituals of restorative separation" were intended to recover order by removing

spiritual threats from the secular world; death rites, for instance, dispatched the dead souls from the world of living kin to their proper place among the ancestral ghosts in the sacred underworld. In contrast, “rituals of creative union” such as birth and agricultural rites invited spirits or ghosts into the secular or human world to ensure harmony, fertility and peace (Hicks 1976: 30, 109–10). In this, we see how Hicks’ binary pairs were both “oppositional” and “complementary”; but we also see how he was committed to a functionalist method that had traditionally sought to account for “the social order”. In anthropology, functionalism stressed productive adaptation and integration of “culture”. “Tetum religion” was functionally, culturally and symbolically “integrated” into ecology, agriculture, architecture, oral history and everything else that fell under the general rubric of “Tetum culture” (editor’s preface in Hicks 1976: x).

However much researchers may have dealt with religious syncretism, acculturation and inconsistency in the field, their published ethnographies tended to omit those dealings in order to present a picture of cultural plenitude. (Shepard Forman, whose work I examine in the next chapter, exemplifies this tendency.) Yet, the first of three monographs to emanate from Hicks’ 1966–67 fieldwork, *Tetum Ghosts and Kin: Fieldwork in an Indonesian Community* (1976), would describe in considerable detail the author’s labour of disentanglement and ordering in a way that contrasted with most other “elegant descriptions of non-literate communities”, as Hicks (p. 17) called them. Hicks’ candid discussion of fieldwork experience can be attributed to the fact that he tailored his monograph to suit a book series: *Explorations in World Ethnography* delivered “lively and readable” studies to an “intelligent freshman audience”, promising to make ethnography “understandable for students”.⁵ Paradoxically, it is the marked paucity of “elegance”—or the wealth of impurity—that makes the unrefined first edition of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* (1976) a remarkable and highly absorbing study (see Maring: 1979: 624).

Almost three decades after its first publication, a new edition of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* (2004) would appear. The altered subtitle—*Fertility and Gender in East Timor*—reflected independence from Indonesia as well as the new thematic emphasis. The second edition was produced under very different conditions in the discipline of anthropology and, as a consequence, some enthralling content, open reflexivity, and residual cultural biases were filtered out in the process of updating the original. In most of this chapter, I stay with

the first edition to explore the hypothesis that Hicks' Durkheimian (that is, Cartesian) interpretive framework deterred him from a fuller appreciation of an ambivalent and possibly ghost-like identity that the local people attributed to him. In the final section, I draw some comparisons with the second edition to highlight the distinctive historical place of the first edition as a pioneering study of Portuguese Timor at a time when anthropology's cultural relativism was still a work in progress.

Finding Informants and Negotiating Identity

To discover that the pagan-to-Christian ratio was more favourable in close-by Caraubalo than in far-off Bibileu was just as well, since Hicks was not alone in Portuguese Timor, but with his wife and baby son, for whom Viqueque town offered better amenities. Maxine Hicks, however, was far from incidental to the research. In fact, at one point in his book Hicks questioned the common notion that spouses hindered the execution of fieldwork. Maxine would soon become an active participant in the research, and her presence as the second term of "we" frequently replaced the author's self-referential "I". Maxine mastered Tetum more quickly than did her husband, she accompanied him on field excursions, helped to arrange photographic shoots in the hamlets, participated in the deciphering of kinship relations and contributed to note taking (Hicks 1976: 2, 18).

By the time Hicks began his fieldwork—or they theirs—participant observation and local village residence had become the key "rite of passage" for any doctoral student of anthropology. It was therefore assumed that once Hicks had chosen Caraubalo, he and his family would move there. Hicks asked the administrator to have a house built for them in Mamulak. The house never materialised. Later, Hicks would realise that it was better not to have settled in Mamulak after all. To live amongst villagers who were "apprehensive about [the Hicks'] intentions," he wrote, would have made it "more difficult for [the people] to have kept obscure customs" from him and Maxine. It turned out that the locals of Caraubalo were averse to "seeing their remarks being taken down in a notebook", so much so that David and Maxine would remember what they had seen and heard during the day, and write it all down at night in the privacy of their Viqueque home. "To have written in front of them," Hicks said, "would have invited awkward questions" (p. 12).

To understand this pronounced local apprehension, we need to regress to September 1966, when Hicks had decided on the *suku* of Caraubalo as a general field location, but still lacked a focal village. Unlike the proximity to the colonial administration that Margaret King had enjoyed, Hicks' research began as a solitary endeavour as he took to daily wandering back and forth along jungle paths between Viqueque and the numerous villages and hamlets of Caraubalo, identifying landmarks and sketching maps as he went. For the most part, he undertook this preliminary activity alone, although his wife or a certain Timorese soldier sometimes accompanied him. Hicks discovered that few people had the patience to talk to him (p. 12). It would seem odd—to Hicks himself as well as to me—that such “lack of productive contact” persisted for nearly three months.

As the end of the year approached, a turning point came quite unexpectedly when one afternoon Hicks and the aforementioned soldier chanced upon a group of feasters in the hamlet of Cailulik. As if the adults present at the celebration were unable to overcome their suspicion about the pair of intruders, it took an adolescent boy named José Pereira to “leap to his feet” to greet them. Hicks recalled that he “had no idea then what [the boy] was talking about” when he explained the occasion as a final death rite for an elder who had been buried exactly one year earlier. José then invited Hicks and the soldier to share the meal, during which

he asked [the soldier] why I had been wandering about the jungle for the last few months. He asked this in Tetum, but I was able to understand what he said, so I gave my answer straight to José in Portuguese, explaining my reasons for coming to Timor. José could not take my reply seriously (p. 12).

To José Pereira, the idea that a civilised person should bother to study the “obscure and backward customs” of a primitive people seemed preposterous (p. 13). Nevertheless, José suggested Hicks come to his father's house in a nearby hamlet, Baria Laran of Mamulak village. Sensing, finally, an important opening, David and Maxine appeared the following day to make the acquaintance of José's father, André Pereira. Over a meal of pork, vegetables and wine, André recounted much about village life. As usual, David and Maxine had refrained from taking notes on the spot. That night, they “wrote down what [they] could recall of André's talk”, which “covered six and a half pages”.

Now that the "ice was broken", their "visits to the hamlets multiplied so encouragingly that [Hicks] quickly filled a notebook". As they immersed themselves in the daily life of the people, Hicks grew aware of the extent to which the people had been deeply influenced by European culture and Christianity. In José Pereira, for example, they found a youth who had been educated by Christian missionaries in a high school in Dili, and who "regarded his newly acquired cultural tastes as superior to [the old] traditions". His father, André Pereira, was "no less scathing towards his pagan and illiterate countrymen". David and Maxine remarked how widespread was this "same [Timorese] disdain for their culture". Picturing themselves "in the vanguard of a newer society", the educated children of chiefs "would plead ignorance when asked about traditional religion or kinship institutions". "But," added Hicks as if deliberating on how to categorise this class of people, although "far more westernized, they were still Timorese", occupying "an intermediate status between two cultures". Hicks found that most people "simply could not believe the activities of villagers could hold interest for outsiders", and it was not long before he gave up explaining his reason for being in Timor at all (pp. 13-4).

Given far-reaching acculturation, Hicks avoided certain types of people who appeared to mimic Europeans—men who "mouthed off aggressively in Portuguese", dressed like Europeans, and presented themselves as progressives. He was clearly not interested in "pseudo-European customs" (p. 15). But getting at the "real Tetum customs" was not just a matter of filtering out unwanted informants and unwanted information as it had been for Armando Pinto Correia (see Chapter Five). Contemptuous attitudes towards pagan beliefs had "infected" ordinary village people with "a cultural inferiority complex". Ultimately, the problem lay with missionaries, who for all their "good intentions" had inculcated among the population the idea that "the native religions were false and certain Timorese customs were immoral". Ordinary village folk, Hicks lamented, had come to recognise themselves as inferior. Had his been a study of acculturation, all this would have constituted good data, but desiring particularly authentic data about old religion, he felt that the inferiority complex impeded his ability to elicit honest answers. His interlocutors, for example, would change the subject when he sought from them information on a particular custom "that missionaries had persuaded [them] was shameful". A deep sensitivity clearly surrounded the topic of Hicks' investigation.

By this time, Hicks was no longer an unwelcome stranger. Yet a distinct attitude of ambivalence towards him lingered, even among those whom he now called his friends. This reserve, perhaps, made him keenly aware of the strategies that helped him obtain data. First of all, he quickly realised that by his very presence he conferred status upon certain individuals. André Pereira, for instance, "had increased his social standing by [the Hicks'] visit, so it was a fair exchange of benefits". "Luckily for me," Hicks added, André "had plenty of rivals who did not want to be outshone" and so "invitations poured in" (p. 14). What was true for André Pereira—that he was keen to be seen fraternising with Europeans—applied to many others.

Hicks' camera proved to be an additional asset. People would always remind him to bring it along to events:

A camera made us welcome in almost everyone's house. Lining up an entire hamlet, Maxine would photograph its residents, and a few weeks later (after the prints had returned from the camera store in Dili) we would distribute copies to the hamlet residents, asking the names and kinship ties of each person in the picture. This technique simplified our task of identification and made the villagers more willing to answer questions (p. 21).

As Hicks learned how best to acquire data, villagers learned that their information had a certain value. Photographs, food, wine, friendship, laughter, enjoyment, curiosity and other yearnings were surely not incidental to these exchanges. Whatever was entailed, learning the give and take was essential to the success of the project.

Come New Year, the Hicks couple seemed to be satisfactorily integrated into community life. Yet Hicks was still bothered by the persistent attitude of wariness towards him. He supposed that having been seen with the census team months earlier, a perception of him as a bureaucrat had taken hold among the population. This was an "inconvenient identification", for "no one in Mamulak was quite clear what I was up to". He guessed that the local people believed he was involved in a surreptitious audit to ascertain livestock numbers that indigenous tax-evaders routinely underestimated. He endeavoured to distance himself from the authorities in order to erase this "bureaucratic identity".

For all the apparent incredulity and distrust, some people were more open about their traditions, especially when they concerned less sensitive topics such as their oral literature. They felt flattered that Hicks wanted to learn their language and, concerned that "the

upcoming generation would neglect the ancient narratives", they would implore him to take down their words lest their heritage be forgotten (p. 15). Agostinha Soares of Mane Hat may have fitted that category of person. On 14 March 1967, she narrated for Hicks the "origin tale" of Caraubalo in a single sitting (p. 22). In fact, this woman became one of Hicks' most dedicated informants as well as a "good friend". She enjoyed "introducing [them] to different features of village life", "loved the limelight", and her "popularity drew [them] into an ever-expanding network of people" (Hicks 2004: 21). Thanks to her, Hicks was finally able to hear the death words (*mate lia*) of a certain song, whose recitation, he said, was "the province of women" and was strictly taboo outside of the funerary or "black" rituals to which they belonged: unlike some words, songs or stories, which simply brought bad luck when uttered in the wrong place (that is, on *lulik* land or near a sacred house) or at the wrong time (during daylight hours), speaking death words inappropriately could bring about the death of the speaker. Hicks was evidently unable to persuade the other women to confide in him the death words. Luckily for him, Agostinha Soares seemed "not in the least inhibited", although she made certain to tell him the forbidden verse in private in case a neighbour was within earshot (p. 29). Clearly, Agostinha shared Hicks' confidence that her recitation would not prove fatal. Implicitly at least, both Hicks and his trusted informant were sceptics about the truth value of the "old religion" and, one could say, as much as Hicks wanted to disentangle the two religions, he took advantage of the scepticism that acculturation and Catholicism had ushered in.

Rubi Loik and the Wandering Soul

Hicks became acquainted with a certain Rubi Loik, a widely respected yet temperamental and sullen individual, except at the time of the harvest when he entered a "jocular mood". Rubi was prone to argue and readily became "mixed up in disputes about stolen chickens". He was notoriously lazy, moreover, "even among a people lacking a Protestant work ethic". The Hicks couple grew "fond of Rubi, and he evidently liked [them] too, for he invited [them] to be the godparents of his infant daughter". Upon learning that Maxine was not Catholic, Rubi Loik changed his mind, leaving husband David wondering whether an ulterior motive had been at play all along. Hicks soon learned that Rubi Loik's brooding silence was best broken



Photo 8.2 David Hicks with villagers standing for a photo in 1967. © Maxine Hicks

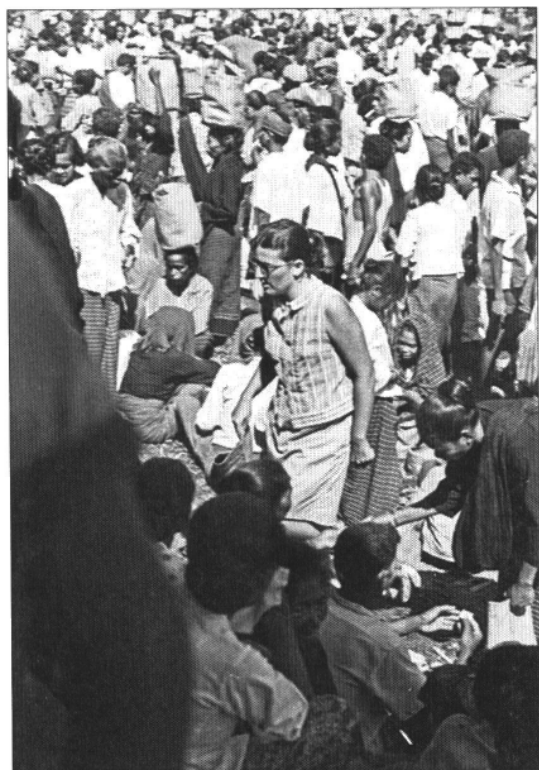


Photo 8.3 Maxine Hicks shopping at the Sunday market in Viqueque, 1967.
© David Hicks



Photo 8.4 Agostinha Soares (fourth woman from the right) pounding rice at a funeral feast in 1967. © Maxine Hicks

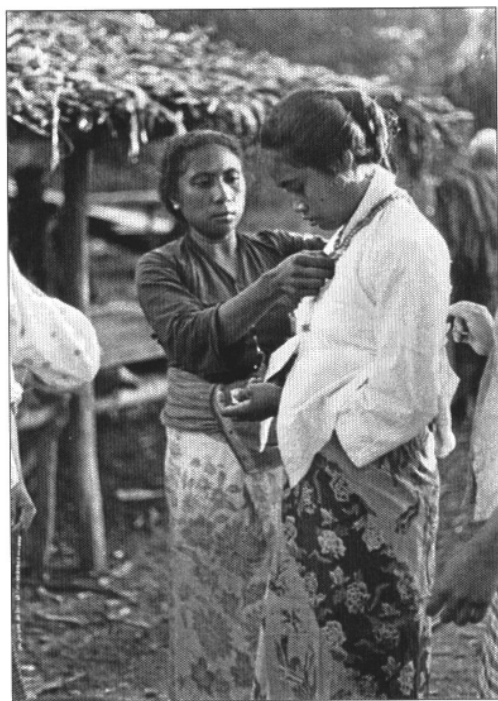


Photo 8.5 Agostinha Soares adjusting a necklace on a flower bearer before a funeral ritual in Viqueque, 1967. © Maxine Hicks

when he was "sufficiently lubricated by wine" (Hicks 1976: 13–4, 38, 50).

Even if Rubi Loik's testimony was untrustworthy, Hicks found his agricultural practices to be well worth observing, and eventually they would form the basis of Hicks' third chapter, "Ecology", of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* (1976). One of Rubi's vegetable gardens happened to be close to town and so presented Hicks with a convenient opportunity to look into agricultural rituals. At least in respect to farming, Rubi also represented an ideal choice since as a "genuine believer" and "firm upholder of the old religion" he performed the rituals more thoroughly than others. Hicks described Rubi's corn shrine, which consisted of "a complex of poles, stones, ferns, and holes ... and wooden debris" set in the heart of the cornfield. This was the "secular home of the corn spirit", who by way of offerings was "induced to leave the sacred world and seek temporary shelter within the shrine", from where it would "enter the soil to fertilise the union of soil and seed". This "ritual of union"—*halo batar moris*—literally gave "birth and life to the corn". Hicks was struck by the sexual symbolism since "seed" corresponded to "sperm" and the holes corresponded to "vaginas"; the number three—being the *three* seeds dropped in each hole—represented "union". Ritual sowing, Hicks stressed, had "humans and a sacred being enter ... into a creative relationship profitable for both". With ongoing inducements from Rubi and his family, the corn spirit would keep returning to its shrine-home in the secular world to ward off the harmful, crop-damaging deeds of dead souls. (And with ongoing inducements of wine from Hicks, Rubi would remain talkative.) At the time of the harvest, the spirits would be the first to feast on the corn at an end-of-season ritual—*sau batar*. This ritual took the corn out of the sacred (*lulik*) realm and made it "available for profane or secular use", thus exempting the food from prohibition (pp. 27, 38–9, 42, 45).

If we have learned that Hicks' assessment of Rubi's character was not entirely favourable, the reader wonders about Rubi's perception of Hicks and wife. The following excerpt is telling:

Rubi had early doubts about us. Three months after we first met him he wanted to know if it was really true we had come to the island to study Tetum and the ways of its speakers; had I not, perhaps, been abandoned by my own kin and left to wander all over the secular world? I was glad to put him right (p. 39).

It would seem that by “putting Rubi right” Hicks insisted on his own “true” story about himself, thereby neglecting to tackle in greater depth the question of how cultural narratives articulate the identity of foreigners. Indeed, Hicks’ recognition of “younger brother” and “older brother” as part of the Tetum Binary Matrix might have been a productive starting point as it had been for Elizabeth Traube, who would later read her own presence among the Mambai through the myth of a younger brother who had left Timor only to return later to seize “political authority”, leaving the elder brother with “spiritual authority”. (Since Chapter Ten concerns this myth, I will not explore it further here.) However much the story of the returning younger brother may have applied similarly to Hicks among the Tetum, it is also plausible that Hicks was perceived not only as a “wandering man” but a wandering or lost soul, a ghostly apparition that, at certain times, particularly during his anterior lone jungle meanderings, may have matched Edward Tylor’s classical definition of souls, ghosts and spirits as: “unsubstantial human images”; a “phantom going from place to place”; or an “ethereal” yet “substantial material being” (Segal 2015: 57, 61). That Rubi Loik, even after three months, echoed the familiar disbelief about Hicks’ proclaimed interest in studying customs, left open the question of what Hicks was *really* doing and who he *really* was. If Margaret King, at times, had been identified as a *lulik* emanation, Hicks may well have been construed as a potentially dangerous materialisation of a dead person who, abandoned by kin, had not received his proper burial, and had been left to wander the secular world, which he now did while operating under the flimsy pretext of studying the Tetum language and customs.

Apart from the oft-asserted uncertainty regarding Hicks’ activities, considerable additional animistic evidence can be assembled in support of the contention that the nature of Hicks’ personhood was in question—or subject to categorical slippage—especially since animistic evidence is mobilised precisely when anomalies, strange phenomena or odd behaviour arise. In the first instance, Hicks had been sighted innumerable times roaming the jungle pathways. The jungle was, by his own reckoning, a wild, untamed and sacred space (in juxtaposition to the village); for Hicks to be there, often alone, and without apparent fear, scribbling in his notebook, can only have appeared extraordinary. Hicks was avoided, perhaps, because his audacious jungle roving pointed to an ambiguous and possibly spiritual provenance. That impression may have been magnified when he was seen in the company of the Timorese soldier, since it

was common Tetum knowledge that demons or nature spirits could manifest as soldiers—something that Hicks himself explains (Hicks 1976: 25, 2004: 36). It was also well known that demons could appear as beautiful women, which raises the question of whether the local people saw in the Hicks family a young married couple with a child, or whether they saw a lost soul and a demonic seductress from whose fertile union a child had been born. The apprehension about Hicks was so strong among the people of Caraubalo *suku* that nobody dared to address him, so much so that when he and the soldier finally interrupted a ceremony, it took the open curiosity of a rebellious adolescent to break the pattern of silence. (Other examples of this boy's non-conformism appear in *Tetum Ghosts and Kin*.) Yet even after the ice was broken, certain oddities continued to raise doubts about Hicks' "real intentions": he was not attached to the Portuguese administrative system as a person of his stature normally would be; his odd-sounding Portuguese distinguished him from other Portuguese-speakers; he wore thongs; he kept away from the more worldly, acculturated villagers, preferring instead traditionalists—and the weirder ones at that, such as Rubi Loik; the significance of his notes created unease; and he blithely put people's lives at risk by asking after information that was taboo, such as the death words. Perhaps it was not as much Hicks' "surreptitious audit" that put villages on edge as it was his distance from the Portuguese administration and the ceremony and etiquette that typically accompanied interactions between Timorese and foreigners (see Roque 2011a).

Studies in the sociology of knowledge show that anomalies have an important role in all knowledge systems, since irregular forms point to unknown causes that, in turn, demand an explanation (Kuhn 1962). Scientific naturalism and animism are similar inasmuch as research into anomalies follows methodological procedures: in the most general sense, animists, like scientists, make empirical observations, advance claims, experiment and test theoretical propositions to understand life (see Latour 2010). In this light, let us reconsider Rubi Loik's puzzling offer and subsequent retraction-of-offer of godparenthood to David and Maxine. I would venture the possibility that Rubi Loik's offer constituted an experiment to elicit animistic data on the Hicks couple's identities, motives and dispositions. By animistic logic, perhaps, lost souls and demons would, by virtue of their very nature, balk at the prospect of godparenthood within a Catholic institution (perhaps it would kill them) and so their answer, whether affirmative or negative, would arm Rubi with vital clues

about their soul-substance. If my conjecture sounds odd, it is worth noting that Hicks himself sensed that there was something he had failed to grasp in all of this, for he went to the trouble of trying to ascertain who the eventual godparents were. In the end, he suspected that there were none, and he intuited that Rubi's offer had been "a political tactic" from the outset, although Hicks was at a loss to know what Rubi had to gain. It would appear that uncertainty prevailed among some Tetum as to who Hicks was: A man? A ghost? A returning younger brother-ghost? All three?

We know that doubts about Hicks' person and intentions gradually subsided as he progressed beyond the long phase of solitary roaming. Yet, even later their lingering doubts would surface during Hicks' mundane interactions with his research subjects. Although he stated at one point in his narrative that "little effort [was] needed for an individual to turn cosmos into chaos" and thus invoke "supernatural" causes or remedies, he resisted applying these precepts to his own presence (Hicks 1976: 109).

The foregoing considerations give me reason to consider how Hicks overlooked the meaning of his "self" to the local Tetum in relation to an intriguing incident that came to pass one day when he was following a burial ceremony in the village of Mane Hat. In this, he had got so far as to accompany the cortège on its way to the cemetery when the expected course of research was suddenly thrown off-kilter by an unscripted move of the ethnographer's hand. In a prominent vignette that introduces *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* (1976: 1), Hicks described the incident as follows:

The malevolent soul was invisible. But the people ... could sense its presence. Stretching out my hand to steady the coffin housing the remains of the well-known elder, Cai Tuli, I suddenly felt the restraining hand of old Leal Soares ... That clammy afternoon ... the coffin bearers were heaving their burden around so recklessly, I feared the corpse might be tossed out. [Without Leal loosening his grip on my arm], I glanced sideways at him as he warned, "The soul of the dead man is trying to re-enter the corpse. Stay clear! There's danger here for you!"

Privately, Hicks wondered whether Leal was "feigning concern to stop [him] seeing the finale of this fascinating ritual of death". Hicks expressed this much: "If all the soul wants is to return to the corpse, why should it bother me? I don't wish to prevent it." Then, Leal explained: "Maybe. But that doesn't count. The boys carrying

the coffin are too strong. Soon [the dead soul] will be mad with anger. Take my advice and stand back! We Tetum know what we are doing. The dead soul will vent its spite on someone ignorant of its tricks." Sensibly, Hicks let "the exchange end there". Leal Soares escorted the despondent anthropologist off to somewhere safe and sound while the cortège disappeared into the cemetery (p. 1).

Hicks evidently felt thwarted in his data collection, and it is clear that he framed his interpretation accordingly. His supposed "ignorance" of such matters appears to have presented danger in the sense that his wandering hand provided an opportunity for a devious spirit. Although Hicks uses the incident to open the introductory discussion about the Tetum fear of dead souls and the attendant ritual processes to manage them, he deliberates no further on what his singular presence may have signified to the locals. What is perhaps required here is not an "ethnographic theologian" but rather a historian. The reader will recall from Chapter Five that the Administrator of Baucau, Armando Pinto Correia (1934: 177n1), had learned that cats were preventatively tied up during burial ceremonies because "should a single pussy happen to jump on the coffin, the deceased would return to life". For his routine dismissal of superstition, Correia saw no need to elaborate on the spiritual power of cats; Hicks, in fact, may have been the first ethnographer of Portuguese Timor to learn that demons could take the form of black cats. To include cats and Hicks in the same equation, one detects a structural homology: each possessed a spiritual potency. Hicks and cats both required restraint. (Only the cats needed to be actually tied up, we would expect.)

Hicks' particular spiritual channel may have also implied weakness. Here, I am approximating Hicks' own interpretation of the situation, since he explained Leal Soares' anxiety as a consequence of the fact that he was "not a member of any clan and had no ancestors to defend [him] when [he] approached Cai Tuli's coffin" (Hicks 1976: 27). The very thing that made Hicks an anomaly (the absence of ancestry), then, made him dangerous, less a malevolent force in his own right than a visible reminder of a contextual vulnerability that he presented; the ethnographer's enthusiasm, therefore, had to be kept in check not only for his own sake but also for the sake of a people who preferred not to deal with revived corpses.

To turn Hicks' ethnography back on the ethnographer himself, at stake in his presence among the Tetum was "the neat dual order of native thinking" that he explained so adroitly throughout his *Tetum*

Ghosts and Kin (1976). An “ordered universe”, for Hicks, was one in which ghosts remained invisible and intangible. But order would descend into disorder when “ghosts and humans assume[d] each other’s properties” such that ghosts became “visible and tangible” (p. 30). To propose that the apparition of Hicks had blurred the boundary between ghosts and humans is to suggest that the boundary between them was indeterminate. In sum, the animistic evidence for Hicks’ indeterminacy was strong: here was a foreign man, a vagrant soul of human appearance, without kin, often sighted straying in the jungle and, most strangely, usually alone; at other times spotted in the suspect company of a soldier—one possible demonic accomplice—or a beautiful woman—another possible demonic seductress; a man, suspiciously charming (British), dubiously generous (with wine) and alarmingly insistent on knowing the forbidden “death words”; a man who had the power to revive a corpse and, what’s more, did not hesitate to try. To what extent, then, could Hicks “set the local people right” in line with his understanding of self? (p. 39). At least the “less acculturated” among the Tetum could not have seen in Hicks: a British anthropologist, committed to 18 months of fieldwork in Portuguese Timor to comprehend the relationship between religion and kinship; a professional ethnographer, accompanied by his wife and son, anxious to establish productive contact with informants that offered specific kinds of data for prospective monographs; a man whose profession impelled him to learn the death words for a chapter on burial rituals; a man who reached out to steady a coffin with no other motive than to prevent a body from spilling out. If Hicks recognised that an ethnographer could not “transcend his own reality” (p. 16), how could he expect the Tetum to transcend theirs?

Spirits: Whereabouts, Movements and Personalities

Hicks’ self-recognition as an “ethnographic theologian” also served his penchant for creating order through his “general classification of spirit entities”. In this, he was possibly influenced by the research of Henk Schulte Nordholt (1971: 141–6) on the Atoni people of western Timor. Hicks sought to evaluate the powers of spirit beings, pinpoint their whereabouts and describe their proclivities (Hicks 2004: 34–42). Villagers’ knowledge was limited, said Hicks (1976: 37), since the “depths of the sacred womb [were] unfathomable for secular creatures, including anthropologists”. It was not, however, impossible to go there, for all over the region “the secular” was

connected to “the sacred” by limestone craters (*fona*; vaginas or vents) that wound “torturously down” into the underworld. The largest crater was Mahuma. The foolhardy climber who “ventured down into the dark void ... would fall prey to the ancestral ghosts”, he warned: “No local would dare” to go down. Hicks (p. 23) gives no indication that he went down there either, as much as he would have liked to interview the ghosts directly or run a focus group. Although filled with ghosts, it was also a spiritual domain in itself, the sacred womb of Mother Earth (Rai Inan) who represented fertility and life and exerted her influence, indirectly, via other spirit forces.

Craters and jungle signified a liminal space between secular and sacred, village and underworld (pp. 2, 32). Some entities, furthermore, could be both spiritual and secular. (As I proposed above, Hicks himself may have occupied this threshold position at times.) Witches (*buan*; also sorcerers) were exemplary, for these hermaphrodites were secular-world humans who kept “one foot in the camp of the sacred realm”. Witches could change form and size, manifesting nocturnally as black owls, nightingales or dwarfs. Their “soul travel” meant they could enter the body of a sleeping victim, usually to make them sick. David and Maxine’s housemaid, in fact, had once awoken to a witch grasping at her throat; the maid shrieked and the witch fled (Hicks 1976: 110–1, 2004: 41–2). Given the widespread terror of witches, even Hicks’ closest friends were reluctant to divulge any information. That left the theologian piecing together “scraps of conversations” by which he concluded that a village often had a witch or two. When witchcraft was suspected, the normal thing was to consult a shaman (*matan dook*; witchdoctor or healer). Standing before the patient, the shaman would masticate betel and areca, spit out the chew and then interpret its shade and colour to assess “what kind of spiritual attacker he [was] up against”—be that a witch or a ghost. If the shaman could “locate the elusive soul” or “counter the spiritual force”, the patient was cured; if not, the patient perished (Hicks 1976: 124). Like Margaret King, Hicks made no mention of victimising alleged witches; had the idea of “culture” become too sacred to cast aspersions upon it?

Nature or land spirits (*rai na'in*), for their part, inhabited forests, bamboo groves and rocky outcrops, or at least these were the points at which they would “enter the upper world”. They could assume the form of a snake, a beautiful woman, a black cat or a soldier. If Hicks had underestimated the power of nature spirits in the original *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* (1976), in the second edition

(2004: 36) he conceded that they exerted a "strong measure of control ... over the lives and aspirations of human beings". Demonic and malevolent in the first edition, they were rather benevolent and protective in the second (Hicks 1976: 25, 2004: 36). Unlike Mother Earth and Nai Maromak (a passive celestial divinity identified with the sun which Hicks does not explore in detail), second-edition nature spirits were powerfully interventionist. Water spirits (*u'e na'in*), for their part, wielded a comparable propensity for good and evil. Emerging from rivers, streams and springs, they were ever ready to meddle in the affairs of the living, for better or worse.

We have already met the soul who visited Rubi Loik's garden. Similar souls (*klamar*) belonged to rice, deer and buffalo. Their main job was to confer or withhold fertility. Human souls in the form of dead kin, however, most preoccupied Hicks. He tried in vain to get data on the existence or whereabouts of human souls (*klamar moris*) before they entered the head of the unborn foetus. Hicks could confirm, at least, that the soul would remain in the head for the duration of a person's life, except when it was forced out by an alien spirit entering the body through one or another orifice. This is what made a person ill. Should the evicted soul fail to re-enter the body, death ensued, and the living soul became a dead soul (*klamar mate*) (Hicks 1976: 24–5). The dead soul of the newly deceased person was, for Hicks, a particular kind of ghost who was liable to flit around restlessly in the secular world harassing living kin, bringing on sickness and trying to get back inside the dead body—as Hicks well knew from personal experience (pp. 1, 114).

Only by way of a series of rituals could living kin negotiate the passage of dead souls from the secular world to the stable underworld womb of the Earth Mother, where they would eventually end up as fully fledged ancestral ghosts (*matebian*). Given the unpredictable personalities of dead souls, Hicks noted that the burial of the body was often the beginning of a protracted drama until such a time as the dead soul became an ancestor ghost. For the kin of the deceased "the first 12 months [after death] were filled with anxiety". Dead souls were most unlike ancestral ghosts or other "underworld occupants" such as demons or nature spirits who tended to stay put unless deliberately urged or accidentally provoked "from the world above" (pp. 25–6, 36–7, 124). Faced with capricious dead souls, living kin could call upon ancestral ghosts to protect them or they could call on a shaman. There was also a preventative approach, which entailed pandering to the appetites of dead souls in order to

keep their retributive side under control. Such was the function of what Hicks calls "pouches" in the domestic life of the Tetum.

To understand the pouches, one must first consider how Hicks saw "the house" as both a physical dwelling and a sort of sacred house. "All houses are sacred houses, in a sense," stated Hicks, possibly lamenting the apparent absence of real sacred houses around his field site. Importantly, each house contained its own household shrine-shelf supporting sacred water pitchers, plates and cloth. These related to birth and marriage and had various ritual and exchange functions. The shelf also supported "the pouch of the ancestral ghosts". That pouch was frequently visited by the ancestor ghosts of the husband's lineage. Ghosts would eat the rice, pork, buffalo meat, betel chew, areca and lime left inside the pouch by the living kinsmen. "Should ancestral ghosts find the pouch empty ... they [would] make their grievance known" (pp. 64-5).

When a kinsman died, close kin would make two identical pouches, designed specifically to manage the deviancy of dead souls. "The pouch of the dead" would be interred alongside the deceased, whereas "the pouch of the living" would join the pitcher, the plate and the cloth at the ritual shelf in the house of the deceased person, where it would stay until one year had elapsed since the moment of death.

During this period, should the dead soul return to its former home, it is said to notice the pouch of the dead hanging from the shelf, and enter. Finding the ingredients for betel chewing, and rice and pork for eating, it becomes so intent upon consuming these it quite forgets to cause the sickness it had intended (p. 65).

Were this colonial ethnography, I would detect irony in Hicks' voice. In this case, however, it seems to me that he was faithfully relaying to his readers the translated wording of the Tetum people as they described what ghosts wanted and how they were diverted. The manipulation of dead soul behaviour would continue until the final death rite (*keta mate*), thanks to which the dead soul would be sent off to the sacred womb (pp. 25, 124).

The final death rite, for Hicks, pronounced the integration of the ghost into the sacred realm of ancestral ghosts, and its relatively (or hopefully) definitive separation from the secular world. Hicks attended at least one final death rite, that of Cai Tuli, whose dead body, as we saw, Hicks was within an inch of awakening. The ritual,

Hicks said, took up an afternoon, followed by festivities throughout the night. In a final act of separation from the dead soul, the people would destroy the deceased person's possessions and discard them in the jungle, including his or her "pouch of the living" and the personal pitcher (which in fact the mother had purchased prior to the child's birth). "At last the soul lay to rest" (p. 124).

Haunted Houses and Ghostly Encounters

There was a certain hamlet named Bua Laran, which made up one of the three lineages of the "Eel Clan", the junior clan of Mamulak's two clans, which, in turn, comprised two of the nine clans in the *suku* of Caraubalo. It is not coincidental that, at this point, Hicks introduces the concept of clan—a group of people united by kinship and descent—since he begins to address the question of totemic differences between distinct groups of kin. In general, said Hicks, a clan recognised "as its founder, a fabulous person, a mythological animal, or some object which *in biological reality* could never have performed this task [of founding the clan]" [emphasis added]. Clans were "frequently justified in creation myths" and had totems (Hicks 1976: 26); a totem was "the founder of a clan" and was its "exclusive property" and made up its "identity". On three separate occasions—26 December 1966, and 3 and 21 January 1967—André Pereira, Rubi Loik and Agostinha Soares respectively narrated to Hicks three versions of the founding myth of the lineage. The myth, in effect, gave the clan its totem (the Eel) as well as its taboos (pp. 77–9). The clan's founding ancestor, the totem Eel (Tuna), meant that it was "taboo for any member of the clan to kill or eat an eel" (p. 26).

In contrast to the aforementioned myth, Hicks uncovered a fascinating "real story" in the same hamlet. This time it is Hicks more than his interlocutors who tells the story in different versions, each corresponding to the first and second editions of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* (1976, 2004). The story is set around 1960 when Bua Laran began to be accosted by ancestral ghosts determined to exact revenge on the hamlet residents for their neglect of ritual obligations, especially the death rites. The ancestral ghosts had thus withdrawn their protection, giving free rein to the hamlet's deceased residents, the dead souls. The hamlet was promptly "thrown into confusion" by "nightmares, nocturnal suffocation and nightly hysteria". "Night after night souls sobbed and ghosts whispered balefully from the dark jungle." The desperate villagers made sacrificial amends "to appease

the ancestors" (who would, in turn, discipline the dead souls), but the effort was in vain. The terror persisted for months. One evening, several residents spotted a tall, female ancestral ghost on incongruously stubby legs. She came at them wagging long, powerful arms. A mop of black hair masked her face, a loincloth concealed her genitalia. The people ran for their lives, one would presume (although Hicks does not say so). Back in the hamlet, the story was retold and embellished. From then on, hamlet life deteriorated even further; during the night, men and women repeatedly woke up, petrified and shrieking, to ghostly hands strangling them. The "collective hallucinatory paranoia" proved too much to handle. At the end of their tether, the locals abandoned their haunted houses and rebuilt a suitable distance away. The sacrifice of relocation was sufficient to placate the ghosts, wrote Hicks, and normal life resumed (Hicks 1976: 28, 2004: 91).

The event might have not been so uncommon. José Martinho (1943: 193) had noticed that "too much sickness in a given place, and the natives might feel obliged not only to change name but also change residence". Hicks' basic description of the haunting at Bua Laran is similar in the first and second editions of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin*. (Quite oddly, neither edition mentions the Viqueque rebellion of 1959 in which several hundred people were killed; these killings might explain the subsequent preponderance of ghosts—see Gunn 1999: 260.) The editions part company, however, in interpretation and terminology. In the first edition, in asking how "a community of rational persons could permit itself to be so wracked by hysteria as to quit a venerated plot of land bequeathed it by sacred ancestors, centuries before", Hicks draws a parallel with "the 19 executions for witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts, during 1692", thus demonstrating that "mass delusion [was] not confined to non-literate peoples". "Any community under pressure," wrote the forgiving Hicks (1976: 28), could "erupt into a swirling caldron of wild accusations involving moral offenses, and sightings of impossible creatures or far-fetched objects", among which he included flying saucers.

Once the idea that their ghosts were perfectly justified in punishing them had won a hold over their emotions, everything the least bit unusual in the hamlet and its surroundings was interpreted as ghostly retribution. The few who remained more rational were caught up in this collective delirium, and only the trauma of a forced migration could end the panic (p. 29).

Hicks may have avoided the term superstition but with an unstated commitment to a Cartesian metaphysics he clearly distinguished rational thought from irrational thought, if not in his treatment of ordinary ritual (where he simply refrained from judging the truth or falsity of beliefs) but in his description of “far-fetched” happenings. Surely, Hicks did not mean to say that reason was the province of Europeans, yet he insinuated as much since his examples of the 17th-century Massachusetts witch-hunt and 20th-century flying saucers would most likely be read as pre-modern exceptions to the Western rule. Hicks’ intention, one may infer, was to accept a measure of Timorese irrationality by inviting the reader to reflect on ourselves—“even we are like this sometimes”—while also implying that the Timorese, outside of such exceptional cases as Bua Laran (where emotions ran wild in a way that recalls historical framings of animism), were more measured or rational (yet still beholden to their beliefs). Nevertheless, first-edition Hicks clearly struggled with the opposition between cool-headed rational action on the one hand, and hysteria, paranoia and delirium and their associated actions—dreaming, gasping, gagging, screaming, trembling, running, relocating—on the other.

Yet, this was not as much Hicks’ personal struggle as it was the struggle of anthropology at the time—the 1960s and 1970s—to apply cultural relativism to the final frontier of Western epistemological supremacy: science, reason, empiricism and truth. By the time of the second edition, this interpretive impasse had been largely resolved: anthropologists would examine true and false *beliefs* symmetrically—including “the far-fetched”—neither privileging Western science nor drawing comparisons with Western societies. So it was that, in the second edition, no mention was made of the Massachusetts witch-hunt, monsters and flying saucers, and our ethnographic psychiatrist (in this case) deleted words like delirium, hysteria and hallucinatory paranoia. Second-edition Hicks simply stated that it was impossible to know “with certainty ... the sociological or psychological factors that led to these fanciful episodes” (Hicks 2004: 91)—the word fanciful being the only residue of his former diagnosis.

We might assume that for such an event to occur at all the hamlet of Bua Laran was strongly animist. Here comes an interesting twist in Hicks’ story, and one that he develops more thoroughly in the second edition: Bua Laran was among the most Christianised hamlets in Mamulak. Given a history of missionary activity—subject to the sustained influence of the Soibada Mission since at least 1924,

as we saw in Chapter Six⁶—it was exemplary of a community in which the more educated had lost faith in “the authority of the ancestors”, and so with growing scepticism they gradually withdrew their participation from sacrificial rites. Naturally, those who had resisted Christianisation interpreted the nocturnal disturbances as ancestral avengement, thus generating a “hysteria” that then spread to the Christians. In other words, as Christianity and education undermined traditional practices, as a schism opened up between those who no longer endorsed ritual and those who did, subsequent adversities found a ready interpretation precisely in that ritual negligence; those who had *not* lost faith in their ancestors came back at those who had, and held them accountable; and those who *had* lost faith, possessed few defences, since they too were having nightmares, dead souls were haunting them too, and they too had experienced (or at least heard about) the towering ancestral female ghost clad only in a loincloth pursuing them with her long lanky arms ominously outstretched and wagging wildly. Far from Christianity and education forcing a gradual erosion of animist practices, the missionary-led neglect of dead ancestors and the ensuing ritual laxity had quite the opposite effect precisely when faced with strange occurrences or anomalies. Christianity could offer few explanations and little solace for adverse phenomena that belonged to animist experience, and the temporary, perhaps shallow, diversion of Christian precepts gave impetus to a new kind of animism founded not on a measured rapport between the living and the dead, but rather a highly reactionary, fearful one. One may well wonder to what extent Hicks was in fact researching a kind of hyper-animism brought about under conditions of Catholicisation rather than the disentangled and ordered “religion of a non-literate people”.

Contrasting the Two Editions of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin*

The first edition of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin: Fieldwork in an Indonesian Community* (1976) speculated on how the people of East Timor would fare under another colonial power following the invasion of December 1975. Neither aware of how murderous the invasion had already been nor predicting the horror of what would follow, Hicks (1976: 4) believed that the “indigenous system” of *sukus*, villages and hamlets would survive for another generation. Later, as the gravity of the situation became known, Hicks, like many foreign academics who wanted to retain access to field sites inside Indonesia, shied from

taking a public stand on the East Timor issue. During the occupation, Hicks transferred his research to neighbouring Flores Island, not returning to the original field site for 32 years, when in 1999 he volunteered to oversee the polling process in Viqueque as part of the United Nations-led referendum on independence. Finally, Hicks was able to assess the impact of occupation. After noting the conversion of the jungle pathways to roads, the remodelled village architecture, and the loss of his many friends to “political violence or natural causes”, Hicks (2004: 142) wrote that it “hardly needs remarking ... that the Caraubalo of 1966–67 no longer exists”. He undertook further research in East Timor over the next few years, bringing new perspectives to what became the second edition of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* (2004). That the second edition would “indulge in a privileged hindsight” is an understatement (p. x)—the architecture of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* had changed no less dramatically than Caraubalo itself. This reflected not just new research but also three additional decades of Hicks’ professional experience, his richer appreciation of historical and cultural change on the island, the contributions of other scholarship on Portuguese Timor and, not least, developments in the field of anthropology.⁷

As we have seen, in the first edition Hicks sought to distinguish what was “purely Tetum” and what was not. By the time of the second edition, however, he understood that much of the “Tetum culture” that he had disentangled from colonialism and Christianity in the first edition remained indelibly bound up with it. First-edition Hicks, for example, had taken a rather ahistorical view of the fact that bodies were put into coffins, buried in cemeteries and interred soon after death; second-edition Hicks, in contrast, understood how both Christianity and Portuguese legislation had brought about changes—indigenous Christians’ corpses were no longer left out on verandas, wrapped up in mats, smoked or placed in trees (pp. 114, 116, 119). In the second edition, Hicks would barely have considered the indigenous political system of *sukus* and so on to be simply “indigenous”. Or, to take yet another example, Hicks of the first edition had viewed sacred symbolism and ritual functions as culturally integral to the ordinary domestic dwelling, but by the time of the second edition he had realised that, with the destruction of sacred houses around Viqueque, ritual practices had in fact migrated from the sacred house to the “back room of the residential houses” (p. 68).

Sacred houses were practically absent in the first edition. But in the second, Hicks subscribed to a sacred house ideal—an abstract and

Photo 8.6 David Hicks with Agostinha Soares and some of her relatives in Dili in 2015.
© Maxine Hicks

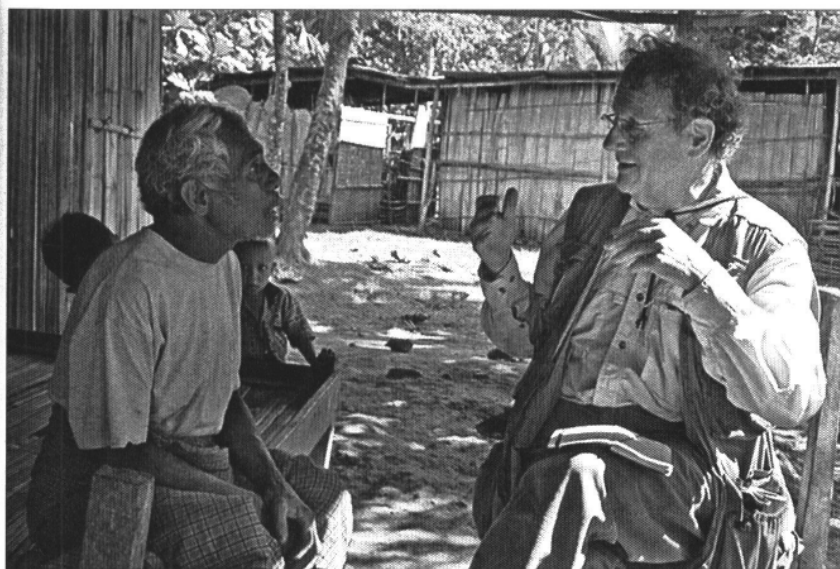


Photo 8.7 David Hicks interviewing David Soares at his house in Viqueque in 2005. © Maxine Hicks

hypothetical sacred house, signifying “cultural purity” and removed from empirical circumstance—in which “the interests of ghosts and kin most tangibly converge”. The sacred house idealism of the second edition points to a “lost cultural essence”, so it is not until the second edition that Hicks deems worthy of mention what he had found in one such sacred house in disrepair at the time of fieldwork. Then, Hicks had found strewn inside: a katana, some remnants of a sacred water vessel, a coconut shell and a tatter of old red cloth bound to a stick, and a “dark brown, three-inch long grindstone ... [which] was said to have once belonged to the founder of the descent group, an ancestor by the name of Leki Fonok” (pp. 43, 91–2). Curiously, Hicks (2017: 48) would hear 30 years later about the existence of some fully functioning sacred houses in his field site vicinity that had been concealed from him (as a foreigner) at the time. In retrospect, then, Hicks gained a new perspective on what he had witnessed in the 1960s; his narrative was in a sense modified by an expression of cultural essentialism located, among other places, in the “repository of sacred objects” of “the ideal sacred house”. The more hindsight, it seemed, the greater the author’s leaning toward essentialist cultural narratives; at the same time, however, the greater the number of statements of how history had diluted and changed the essences.

A shift in theoretical emphasis also emerges in the revised *Tetum Ghosts and Kin*. The original monograph portrayed the world of the Tetum as one which was forever on the verge of breakdown; things turned “topsy-turvy” when social conventions were slighted, when an “unseen monster” loomed, when a coffin was inopportunistly steadied, when the needs of ghosts were not met, when rituals were neglected. Social order, in turn, depended on order in the “system of categories” where things and spirits had to be in their proper place, fulfilling their expected roles in the respective “sacred” and the “secular” domains (Hicks 1976: 109, 124). Hicks therefore responded to the classical functionalist challenge in sociology to explain “the social order”, which he did through recourse to a structuralist logic of binary categories and the functionalism (adaptive and disorder-averting) of ritual.

The theme of averting social chaos did not disappear from the revised edition. But as the new subtitle suggests, Hicks placed a strikingly positive focus on the central proposition that “the source of fertility, trapped by ritual for the benefit of humanity, [was] considered to lie in the world of the dead”. In this, ancestors played a particular role “in promoting fertility and ensuring life”. Rituals in which women were designated a central role were “devices for

accessing the fertilising authority of the spirit” whose “recurring purpose [was] to bring life to the community” and to support “the human need to find sustenance and reproduce” in the struggle against “infertility and death [which] are the adversaries of humankind” (Hicks 2004: ix, xi, 2, 24). If, in the first edition, the narrative was one of avoiding *social* chaos, in the second, it was rather one of enhancing fertility against the odds of *nature*. Hicks’ inclination from “the social” towards “the natural”, perhaps, reflected the growing pervasiveness of the ideology of development more than it did anything strictly empirical that emanated from his original field observations. He shared Arthur Hocart’s (1954) view that because rituals were all about creating more of life’s necessities, they became all the more crucial in precarious natural environments and in societies exhibiting technological underdevelopment. To this effect, Hicks acknowledged a debt to German geographer Joachim Metzner (1977), who conducted his fieldwork in Baucau and Viqueque a few years after Hicks’ departure from Timor.

Other differences between the two editions might have had more to do with a simple reassessment of the empirical materials against evolving theory. Totems, for example, were absent in the second edition. The eel was no longer deemed the totem of its respective clan. Another lineage whose founding had been facilitated by a particular plant (since the plant had originally helped mythic ancestors to climb out of Mother Earth) expressed, for Hicks, no more than “totemic associations”; it was *lulik* (forbidden) to eat the plant (Hicks 2004: 52). Other content disappeared from the second edition for reasons that are not clear. The evocative story of Hicks’ near awakening of the dead Cai Tuli, so prominent on the opening page of the first edition, was removed from the second one.

Across the two editions of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* (1976, 2004) we have already seen in the story of Bua Laran how Hicks had moved further down the path of cultural relativism. If cultural relativism encompassed a gradual 20th-century ethno-epistemological project to remove hierarchical judgements concerning the relative evolutionary or cultural progress of different cultures and, instead, to examine those “cultures” on their own terms (the emic perspective), then the respective editions of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* intersected that relativist project at two distinct historical points. In the first edition, Hicks, half-a-relativist, had sought distance from the social evolutionary position of earlier schools of thought such as that advanced by James G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough* (1890) who, not unlike Edward Tylor, ranked magic, primitive religion (that is, animism), religion,

and science along a single continuum from irrational to rational. Hicks no longer subscribed to these value-laden rankings by refusing certain terminology, including the term "animism". Nevertheless, by replacing animism with constructs such as "old religion" or "the religion of non-literate societies", he could not help but evince the hierarchies he intended to expunge.

While Hicks avoided the term animism in the first edition, he kept some of its associated terminology, such as "pagan". In the revised edition's effort to suppress the terminology associated with the original concept of animism as primitive religion, pagan was substituted for the term non-Christian. In doing so, Hicks engaged in a tacit critique of the colonial undertones of his first edition since the idea of paganism, like the notions of animism and primitive religion, had served as a discursive instrument of colonisation. In what concerns Portuguese Timor directly, he had become explicitly sensitive to the pejorative missionary view of *lulik* as a cult in which the *luliks* had been portrayed as objects of prayer (Hicks 2004: 26). One could say that Hicks had responded to anthropology's crisis: the uncomfortable recognition of its historical lodgement in colonial relations and its explicit or implicit alliance with colonial viewpoints. To replace the notion of pagans with that of non-Christians was to negate the hierarchical structures in which animism had been shaped historically. For similar reasons, "Protestant work ethics", "biological realities" and so forth were also taken out of the second edition.

It would be incorrect to see the second edition of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* simply as a redrafted, more polished version of the original text. Both editions, rather, reflect the academic milieu in which they were created. Across the two versions, Hicks made adjustments to the functionalist, structuralist and symbolic theoretical underpinnings. While he remained committed to Cartesian metaphysics and Durkheimian structure, he discarded the Tetum Binary Matrix and backed away from an absolute demarcation between the sacred and the secular (p. 131). The second edition also placed less emphasis on the role of anomalies, for it was only in the first that he quoted from Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger* (1966: 143):

Any given culture must confront events which seem to defy its assumptions. It cannot ignore the anomalies which its scheme produces, except at the risk of forfeiting confidence. That is why, I suggest, we find in any culture worthy of the name various provisions for dealing with ambiguous or anomalous events (cited in Hicks 1976: 124–5).

Given his earlier focus on anomalies, first-edition Hicks may in fact have been much closer than his second-edition self to discovering the main anomaly that arose by virtue of the ethnographic encounter: Hicks himself. Perhaps his conviction that an ethnographer cannot "transcend his own reality" (p. 16) prevented him from trying. So it was that he would "put his research subjects right", without acknowledging that his very need to explain his presence, time and again, on his own terms, could have provided him with critical information for understanding his own spiritual potency among the eastern Tetum. If so, Hicks was constrained by the categorical stickiness of Durkheimian thinking that he applied to the people he researched, thus limiting his capacity to consider the expressions of what may well have been his intermittent categorical slippage from man to ghost.⁸

9

The Apprentice (An ethnography of unintended consequences)

American anthropologist Shepard Forman arrived in Portuguese Timor in August 1973 with his Brazilian wife, Leona Forman, and their two young children. They went to live among the Makassae people in the administrative post of Quelicai, high on the slopes of the Matebian Ranges of Baucau district. The road there was little more than a track, so it is not surprising that Quelicai was poor in goods and services. Amidst a scattering of houses were the administrator's house and office, two understocked Chinese stores, a bare infirmary, a public school and a Catholic church. The Formans built their house on the far edge of Quelicai, in Lakoliu, one of the 12 *sukus*. There, with the twin male and female peaks of Matebian towering over them, and rice paddies and vegetable gardens surrounding them, they would remain for 15 months.

Not long after arrival, the family accompanied the administrator on a census-taking to a remote *suku*. The Forman couple was struck by the curiosity the local people directed towards their two children, especially to their two-year-old platinum blond son. Shepard, Leona and the two children evidently upset the local people by following the administrator to the top of an extinct volcano. After coming back down, the Formans overheard that someone intended to kill their son. That "someone" turned out to be a spirit: the volcano was evidently a *lulik* site whose spirit "ate" blond children. The occurrence alerted Forman to the dangers of intercultural misunderstandings. At this point, however, he could not have known which intercultural

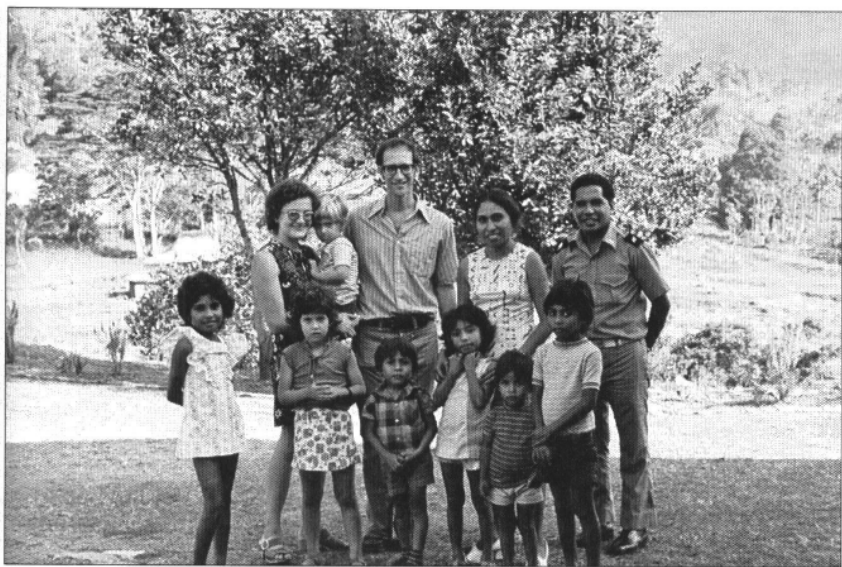


Photo 9.1 Shepard and Leona Forman with their two children, Jacob (in Leona's arms) and Alexandra (standing in front of Leona), with the Administrator of Quelicai, Gaspar Sarmiento, and his family. Quelicai, October 1973. © Shepard and Leona Forman



Photo 9.2 Shepard Forman carrying his two children up to the sacred volcano. Behind him is the Administrator of Quelicai. © Shepard and Leona Forman

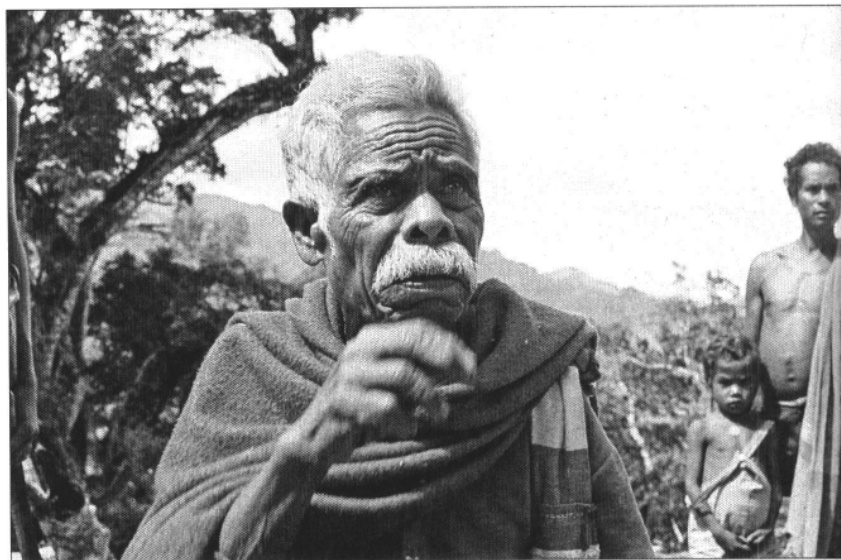


Photo 9.3 Shepard Forman's guide and teacher, the "guardian of myths and traditions", Nanai'e Nau Naha. October 1973. © Shepard and Leona Forman

misunderstandings lay ahead. Ruy Cinatti's parting advice, offered in Lisbon, had been practical: "There is a mottled sea shell. Don't let your children play with it, for it is very poisonous. The *baneleke* is the most deadly of snakes. If you are bitten, seek help immediately, though it will probably be of no use. Don't get involved in local politics."

Many months would pass before any dangers—animal, political or spiritual—would present themselves. Meanwhile, Forman became acquainted with an elderly ritual specialist. This "guardian of myths and traditions" was addressed respectfully as Nanai'e Nau Naha. Forman would refer to Nanai'e as his cicerone, and he would later acknowledge a debt to him for his understanding of the Makassae language and culture (Forman 1980: 341, 342n5). This sense of debt would eventually compel Forman to add Nanai'e as co-author on the draft of one of his major works (see 1977: 286, cf. 1980). "How to give back to the people we were studying was very much on my mind," said Forman.¹

Forman had not gone to Timor looking for a semblance of authentic culture as other post-war anthropologists had done. On the contrary, he had been eager to study the evolving economic and political exchanges between the Portuguese and the Timorese. Once in Quelicai, however, it appeared that direct Portuguese involvement



Photo 9.4 Leona Forman observing Timorese women weave on the veranda of the Formans' house. Leona's son, Jacob, peeks through the window. January 1974. © Shepard and Leona Forman

seemed to be limited to the annual census. Only a few people spoke broken Portuguese, the church had no priest, and life went on up-mountain quite independently of down-mountain administration. Forman suspected that in the higher areas flanking the range, Europeans had never been seen before. The far-reaching "Portugalisation", "acculturation" and "Christianisation" (that most ethnographers had noted) were arguably less applicable to higher parts of the Matebian area. Forman chose to focus instead on marital and mortuary ritual processes (especially exchange) and their relationship to kinship alliance (especially marriage), food cultivation (especially rice) and Makassae beliefs (especially death) (Forman 1977, 1980, 1981). Leona, for her part, participated fully in the fieldwork endeavour (Forman 1980: 340). As a journalist, she took a lively interest in Timorese weaving, writing articles on the subject for a Brazilian magazine.

Forman's specialisation was economic anthropology. So, Forman's enquiry went beyond symbolism to focus equally on the material aspects of agriculture (Forman 1981: 96). For him, material and symbolic aspects combined in exchange relationships that gave rise to what he called the "Makassae life paradigm". Exchange was the "idiom of Makassae life". "Continuity of life" and subsistence in its

material and social forms depended on exchange, in particular the exchanges between wife-giving groups and wife-taking groups in a patrilineal system (where wives were absorbed into the husband's lineage) and patrilocal system (where wives took up residence among the husbands' lineage).

Forman's intermittent references to the broader Portuguese administrative and religious context betray at least shades of acculturation or, more succinctly, adaption to the colonial presence. Forman's guide, Nanai'e, for instance, who hailed from a "lesser house", had only assumed certain ritual responsibilities because the traditional experts of a "higher house" down-mountain had converted to Christianity. Christians would be buried in cemeteries outside the ancestral hearth, while only their sarongs and pillows would receive the full ritual burial inside the ancestral hearth (Forman 1980: 243n20). Looking further back into the past, Forman surmised that trading (particularly of beads and gold discs) between the Portuguese authorities and native rulers had followed the pattern of exchange between wife-givers and wife-takers; and certain forms of bridewealth payments had contributed to the kind of social stratification that had become "the handmaiden of Portuguese colonialism" (p. 342n11). About more contemporary matters, Forman briefly mentioned the Makassae sale of rice and maize to the Chinese when the annual head tax was due. So, however much the Makassae of Quelicai were relatively unacculturated—especially at the higher elevations—one might ask to what extent Forman's "Makassae life paradigm" was circumscribed by the matters he selectively addressed.² In any case, Forman insisted that the "socio-economic and politico-cultural traditions" of the Makassae of Matebian were "fairly uniform" (Forman 1981: 154).

This is not to say that the Forman's "Makassae life paradigm" was timeless. His first essay (1977) dealt specifically with historical Timor's native political system and exchange relations as phenomena both prior to and contiguous with colonialism. Indeed, Forman's most radical proposition was that the political system and its attendant system of marital and mortuary exchange had only emerged relatively recently. Reading Makassae myth into history, Forman proposed that in centuries gone by, men would "strike out on their own" to settle unoccupied lands, or else they would conquer new lands through warfare—hence the notable territorial expansion of the Makassae. Yet, Forman would discern from Makassae and Portuguese accounts that with increasing population pressure and, finally, pacification,

agriculture would become permanent rather than shifting, and so the "system of bridewealth and brideservice" would emerge, providing "for the movement of both men and women among allied local groups" (Forman 1981: 107).

It is important to distinguish Forman's two distinct styles of ethnographic narrative. His major book chapters (1977, 1980, 1981) lack reflexive comment on the fieldwork process. Two shorter pieces, in contrast, were eminently personal: "Spirits of the Makassae" (1976) and "A Jewish Perspective on East Timor" (2001). That Forman wrote the latter two articles at all attests to the value he placed on understanding fieldwork as experience; that very little of his experience made it into the book chapters attests to the pressures of the academy to do a kind of impartial, impersonal science.

Circumventing the Taboo Against Naming the Dead

Before Forman had set foot on Timor, he suspected that the "strict taboo" across the Lesser Sunda Islands against "naming the dead" outside of "ritual contexts" would similarly apply to the Makassae. As Forman set about dominating the local language, observing the activities in the rice fields, and learning kinship terminologies for "living kinsmen", he could not ignore "the dead" who, he noted, were "all around", lying "buried in prominent gravesites at the ancestral hearths and [who were] invoked as the spirit causes of most contretemps". The anthropologist would be asked to attend Makassae rituals where he "was encouraged to tape-record the incantations" calling upon the spirits to each "receive his share of a sacrificial pig, water buffalo, chicken, or sacred rice". All this "piqued [Forman's] curiosity". However, to hear the ritual summoning of the dead during ritual performances was one thing, but quite another was to gain an appreciation of how "the dead" related to genealogies, social obligations and reciprocities.

Such an appreciation could only be developed through conversations that took place outside of the ritual context; but at those times, Makassae taboos were invoked; one could not mention the names of dead people, much less chat about them. Nanai'e would nevertheless taunt Forman "with allusions to the links between the spirits and his living kinsmen", offering him "hints with a knowing smile that only whetted [Forman's] appetite for the unknown". Yet, the anthropologist accepted that the unknown "was also unknowable", and his ethical respect for that taboo kept him "from asking the



Photo 9.5 Shepard Forman recording at a Makassae funeral. November 1973.
© Shepard and Leona Forman

hundreds of questions that buzzed in [his] head". In a curious reversal of roles, Forman occasionally reminded Nanai'e of Makassae taboo: "Once, for example, [Nanai'e] began to explain ... his relationship as the closest descendent of a one-time wife-giver to the lineage of a dead man, to whose funeral he had been called", before Forman quickly cut him short. Nanai'e then congratulated Forman for his comprehension of Makassae ways, and "jokingly told [him] that one day he might make [him] his apprentice" (Forman 1976: 12). Already, Forman appears as someone quite unlike David Hicks (1976), who had no qualms about breaking taboo. Given Forman's background interest in ethics, it is not only inevitable that such questions preoccupied him, but also that the textual presentation of the ethnographer's self would have to reflect his ethical ideals.

In the field, the progress of most anthropologists is usually bound up with questions of finding the right field site, learning the local language and securing informants. Forman's experience reveals something unique. About eight months into the fieldwork, the family went to Australia briefly for Forman to lecture at the Australian National University. When they returned to Quelicai a few weeks later, they "were greeted as long-lost friends or at least objects of greater trust". Forman supposed that "coming back [stood] as testimony

to one's commitment" (Forman 1976: 12). Yet there was more to this shift in mood from the ever-friendlier Makassae. Forman had returned to Timor with a copy of the Haggadah he had picked up at a Passover Seder at the Israeli embassy in Canberra. Forman would "recall with wonder" the afternoon when Nanai'e spotted on his desk the illustrated text that told of the Jewish liberation from slavery in Egypt. Nanai'e "was struck by the drawings of ... ancients, depicted, not unlike himself, barefoot and in simple cloths". Although illiterate, he was also fascinated by the distinct Hebrew and English scripts.

What is this? he asked, and I explained that it was the history of my people told in our ritual and our daily language at a meal designed to pass on our story from generation to generation. Could I write out their history in their ritual and daily language, he asked, so that his son would know what it means to be Makassae? I could, I said, recalling the linguistic course in which I had learned the art of phonetic script.

Later, Nanai'e reappeared at Forman's door with a group of elders. After examining the book, the men decided that for Forman to present the history of the Makassae in a book like the Haggadah did for the ancient Jews, he would need to "attend their marriage and mortuary rituals, record their myths and legends, and map their genealogy from Uru-Uato (Moon-Sun), their supreme (and only) deity, through generations of begats to Nanai'e and his only son" (Forman 2001: 2). And for this, they granted permission to "open the door", to speak the names of the spirit ancestors until such a time that a ceremony would be convened to conceal the names again. In such a way, Forman became their apprentice and scribe, acquiring knowledge to meet a local demand in what could only have resulted in a transformation of animism—not just through making a Makassae Haggadah as a physical object, but through the very process of communicating animism to an outsider. Nanai'e, for his part, became more than a cicerone to Forman. He was now his teacher.

Forman swiftly put aside his concerns about breaking taboos as he entered a "rapture of learning":

My camera, my tape recorder, my diary and I attended births, marriages and funerals. [We] were guests at the *umu gini*, the thirty-year after death dispatch of the soul of the departed to the land of the ancestors high on Matebian mountain. At the centre of each of these rituals were the sacrifice of an animal and

the offering of rice brought as a gift for that purpose, always accompanied by a communal meal. I diligently transcribed my tapes, annotated my descriptions and stretched my genealogies across pieces of tracing paper that side by side extended across our small living quarters (Forman 2001: 3).

Now, Nanai'e could freely disclose the origin myth of the sacred origin site of Turanaba'a: A wren flew down from the top of Mount Matebian; the wren then drove back the floodwaters that engulfed the land, but in doing so broke its leg and was turned into rock; that was now the sacred rock-wren that nestled in the hollow of the sacred banyan tree of Turanaba'a.

Nanai'e also told of how the founders of the first Makassae people had been born from Moon-Sun's son, a hermaphroditic ancestor who had burst out of the same mountain as the wren and divided into a brother and a sister, who incestuously bore a baby boy and a baby girl, who procreated as their parents had done, and whose "youngest son was given to the childless founder of Ka'o Si, Nanai'e's own house of origin" (Forman 1976: 14, 1980: 341n6, 1981: 98). From there, Nanai'e explained "his own agnatic [paternal] lineage ... carefully reconstruct[ing] his genealogical ties to other lineages through ancestors who moved down the mountainside with their immediate kinsmen in a process of fissioning that gave rise to the present clusters of Makassae descent groups". The cosmological universe, wrote Forman, soon

became flooded with names of sacred sites; with accounts of warfare between a female moon and a male sun, the defeat of the moon by fire, and the domestication of the cock; and with tales of ancestors ascending to the sky on areca palms and siring children who descended to earth through seven vulvas of a particular configuration of stars.

Word spread around that Forman was open to all people's stories. Visitors would sit on Forman's veranda and ask him to turn on the tape recorder. They "laughingly told about the sexual component of their house-building ceremonies, about their marriage exchanges and their mortuary rituals". They also relished having Forman take their photographs. Later, he would return the prints to them. Swapping photographs for information in a way that might have conformed to a certain "idiom of exchange" as well, Forman accumulated all manner of data. The research project had really become "an anthropologist's dream" (Forman 1976: 14).

Marital, Mortuary and Agricultural Exchange

Forman would follow the people—never the “natives”—to where marriage negotiations occurred. He would observe how the wife-givers had the upper-hand in negotiations where pebbles and maize niblets were counted out to represent the number of buffalo, horses and swords to be transferred with the new wife to her husband's lineage. He would learn that wife-takers' bride payment of water buffalo, horses and swords would be met with wife-givers' counter-gifts of boiled rice and pork, bead necklaces and woven cloths. At the material level of exchange, Forman would keep account of the give and take of animals and objects, how many of these there were, how regularly they were traded. These he translated as “the content, rate and flow of exchanges”. Numerous variables in content, rate and flow would come to light, and he would seek to describe how payments differed and explain why they differed. He would deduce that marital exchanges were more negotiable and flexible than they might at first appear, that under certain conditions bride-service could complement or even replace bridewealth and that matrilocal anomalies existed to the patrilocal norm. He would uncover the unexpected—that bridewealth, far from being means-tested, was likely to be calculated on what had been paid for a mother or a grandmother (Forman 1980: 159).

Forman did not settle for seeing what and how much was exchanged, as colonial ethnographers had done. He sought to establish what the gifts meant to the Makassae themselves: “Cooked or boiled rice was the woman's sperm and blood that completed her” (Forman 1981: 100), would come the enigmatic reply when Forman asked what the cooked rice was for. “Our daughters should not go off unclothed” was the pragmatic response to the question of why the wife-givers gave cloths (Forman 1980: 143n15). “If you don't give you are not human” was the explanation for why gifts had to be made in the first place (p. 177). And “you cannot eat your own” expressed the Makassae food taboo that prevented wife-givers from eating the (gifted) rice, or wife-takers from eating the (gifted) buffalo (Forman 1981: 100).

Forman found that mortuary exchanges lacked the flexibility of marital exchange. As executed through a series of rituals and coordinated by the deceased's immediate descent group, wife-givers and wife-takers exchanged gifts and delivered costly “death payments” to the deceased's closest matrilineal kin. In content, the transfer of

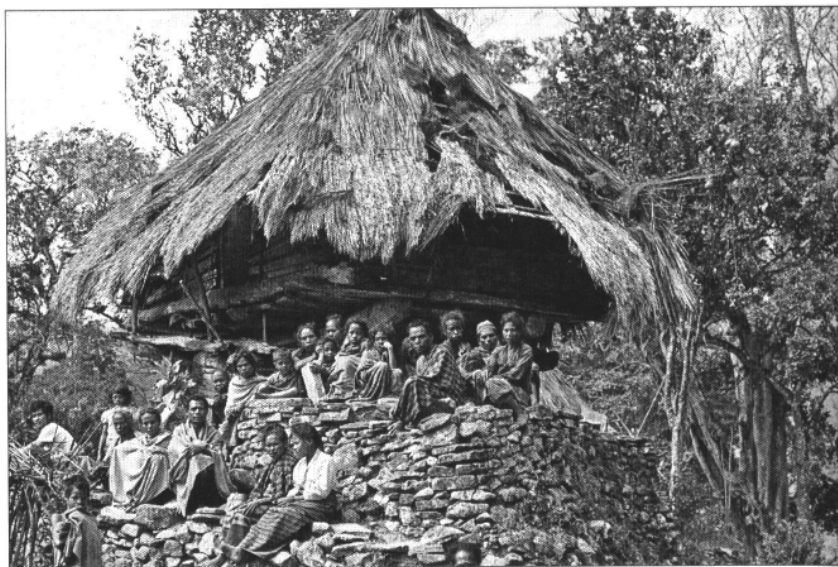


Photo 9.6 A Makassae lineage house. November 1973. © Shepard and Leona Forman

mortuary gifts mirrored the marital gifts (albeit without the gifts of beads and gold discs). Instead of wife-givers and wife-takers negotiating directly, the deceased's immediate descent group would take charge of mortuary exchange on their behalf.

Not everybody was eligible for a proper burial. Suicides, nameless children, the murdered, witches and people who plummeted to their death from a tree were all interred unceremoniously (Forman 1980: 164). But for those who did qualify for a hearth burial, the funeral, at least "to the beholder", proceeded "as an odd mix of tragedy and business of the day":

Natal women stopping to wail at the bier momentarily punctuate the otherwise casual mood of feasting and jocular card playing that marks the nightly vigil around the cloth-draped coffin under the lineage house. With the arrival of each group of wife-takers and wife-givers, the deceased's descent group demands an accounting of exchange goods, which are supposed to and usually do arrive before the burial takes place. The rest of their time is spent coordinating the slaughter of animals for sacrifices to their ancestral spirits, cooking food for affines [in-laws], and gathering together the all-important prestations [gifts] to the dead man's MB [mother's brother's] lineage (pp. 164–5).

The second day of the funeral began with a dawn divination at the origin site to determine "the names of the lineage houses or the spirits that might be responsible for the death". Once identified, another sacrifice from the offending spirit's lineage house to the lineage of the deceased was called for. Then

the women of the lineage begin to wail in earnest; and the male kinsmen initiate prolonged discussions with their affines about the quality of relations among themselves, especially as the relations bore on the deceased, and about the possible motives of the ancestor spirit in creating the condition that caused the death. The wailing continues throughout the day [even during the feasting] reaching a crescendo in the late afternoon, when the burial finally takes place (p. 166).

On a night following one such burial, Forman accompanied Nanai'e to a secret ritual "previously only done in private". As they wound their way up the mountain trail towards the hearth, Nanai'e joked to some of his passing clansmen that Forman had really become his apprentice (Forman 1976: 14). Arriving at the "freshly covered grave", Nanai'e performed a series of highly choreographed moves intended to free the soul so it could begin its journey. The next day, the apprentice returned to watch the concluding funerary act where "seven pieces of the uncooked meat [were] laid on a flat stone on the grave to accompany the soul on its journey of seven deaths" (Forman 1980: 167). After a couple of days of this intense funerary activity, Forman was perhaps grateful that the Portuguese had imposed "exorbitant license fees" on funerals, such that the Makassae had been pressured to reduce them from seven to just two days (Forman 1980: 164, 1981: 99). In this, too, we find an example of where Forman declined the invitation to explore further the colonial influence.

Over consecutive years, ceremonies that "gave to the grave" continued with the requisite exchanges amidst the beating of gongs. Forman learned that the soul would die seven times in seven years, and after the first physical burial it would receive a further six burials from its "fellow souls before ascending to the clouds" where "as spirits, they would hover together around the crest of Matebian ... forever in calling distance of the living so that they may exercise their own wants and exact a measure of social control over the living descendants" (Forman 1980: 164). So, the deceased's living kin would lend encouragement to "fellow souls" by giving to the grave yearly.

Give-to-the-grave rituals anticipated "the all-important Umu Gini, 'the making of the dead'", whereby "the soul of the deceased [was] finally dispatched to Mate Bian where it [would] live forever among the ancestral spirits". The ceremony was supposed to be staged on the seventh year after the death of the deceased, but the one that Forman was lucky to witness "occurred 35 years after the death of the ancestor being honoured". "Inevitably," explained Forman, it "took much longer", and the ritual would be put on hold until "the descent group [had] accumulated exchangeable wealth". Other pressures rather precipitated the enactment of the Umu Gini, such as when "lineage members felt that propitiating a major ancestor would ameliorate a difficult situation such as a lack of rain or a succession of poor harvests", or when "a period of illness suggests that it is time to look after the ancestors again" (Forman 1980: 343n21, 1981: 110n16). Apart from the ritual slaughter of large numbers of animals, the Umu Gini did not involve much: a large flat rock had to be placed atop the ancestral tomb, upon which sacrificial meat and sacred rice were offered to the soul of the deceased and to Mother Earth. Yet it implied a host of other ritual events, especially those executed by the deceased's agnatic kinsmen as they embarked on the seasonal cultivation and preparation of the sacred rice.

At this point, we begin to sense how Forman articulated the connectedness of agricultural ritual cultivation into the logic of mortuary ritual and marital alliance. Without foregoing an expression of the aesthetics of the event, Forman described "the sowing of purely symbolic sacred rice in the deceased's field by his heirs" as

a beautiful ceremony high on the ancient mountain terraces [where] groups of kinsmen, all members of the descent group, faced each other on a rock representing Mother Earth and under a tree representing Father Sky. The deceased's immediate agnates stood under the tree responding to the provocative verse of their in-marrying women and collateral kinsmen who crowded together on the rock. Two young married males broadcast the seed between them in a configuration that was metaphorically and manifestly reproductive. From the rock, the invitation sang: ... *Sow the rice with the moon!* And the tree warned: ... *Sow it badly and you store an empty basket* (Forman 1981: 102).

This, in turn, was a prelude to another ceremony where "a stalk of sugar cane was silently but forcefully thrust into Mother Earth in front of the vigil stone used for sacrifices in the field", "an anxious ritual entreaty to the rice stalks to stay erect just as the kernels are

about to appear". A succession of rice rituals led up to the equally ritualised threshing, winnowing and pounding of the rice, the sum of which would allow for "the transformation of sacred rice into sperm" (Forman 1980: 168–9, 1981: 102).

Throughout Forman's "rapture of learning", nothing, it seemed, was beyond his reach. Even the most respected of taboos had been circumvented. And once the anthropologist had explained the difference between slide film and prints—that slides only projected an immaterial image and could not "possess" an object as a print could do (Forman 1976: 16)—he was free to photograph even the most sacred objects. Days were spent in the fields and at ritual sites. Nights were passed mulling over recordings and notes. "The pace was fast, the work fun and intriguing, and my notebooks were filling up with extraordinary data," pronounced the contented apprentice.

Foreseeing the history of the Makassae appearing as a sort of Haggadah, Nanai'e "delighted in the process of [Forman's] learning" and "urged [him] to write down everything in Makassae, as well as in English, so that his children would never forget the ways of their people" (p. 14). Forman's writing shows no intellectual interest in the question of what exactly Makassae children were at risk of forgetting, and what acculturating forces would be implicated. In any case, to reassure himself perhaps that Forman presented a solution to the "loss of tradition", Nanai'e would periodically evaluate his apprentice's progress. Wrote Forman:

One day, when I spotted a woman leading a goat to a neighbouring hamlet, I explained to Nanai'e her relationship to the family of the dead man she was going to honour and why the gift had to be made. I described the intimate relationship between life and death, production and reproduction, that is the essence of Makassae belief, ritual and everyday conduct. I unfolded my genealogical charts and traced for him the lineal connection between that woman and the dead man's family, all the way back to Uru-Uato [Moon-Sun] (2001: 3).

For Forman's pronounced *literary* competence, the reader of his work is left with the impression of him as an extremely competent field researcher.

Interpretations

Exchange was as central to Forman's Makassae as the Tetum Binary Matrix had been to David Hicks' Tetum. Forman demonstrated that

not just lineage but also the earth and soil were propagated through exchange, and this concurrence of materiality and symbolism found expression in all manner of rituals and myths (Forman 1980: 152–3, 1981: 100). Bridewealth transfers and the concomitant counter-gifts, therefore, were not the straightforward material transfers that they initially appeared to be. Makassae marriage implied a symbolic exchange in which the “means of production” were exchanged for the “means of reproduction” (work animals for wives). “It was not the simple exchange of women that denoted alliance among the Makassae,” wrote Forman, but the “exchange of goods and tokens which stood for the related groups and provided a meaningful context in which production and reproduction were paradigmatically stated.” In this system, “things ... stood for social groups and defined the cosmological universe in which marriage occurred” and thus things “stood apart” from “the movement of women ... between groups”. Makassae women, consequently, participated in “a system of marriage and should not be confused with the goods that defined it”. Forman urged not to interpret Makassae marital exchange by Western bourgeois values, for these conferred a particular meaning on economic transactions that tended to be seen in commodity terms. Despite the fact that the Makassae deployed a “payment idiom” in their everyday speech to refer to the “movement of women”, a rational system, not an exploitative one, lay behind “the exchange of women as part of a total system”, insisted Forman (Forman 1981: 107–8). Forman’s sophisticated cultural relativism commanded that we judge others on their terms, not ours.

Forman did not consider the system of payments for marital exchange, and thus alliance, to be separate from funeral exchange or from mortuary rituals. In fact, separations of any kind were anathema to Forman if it compromised the complex relational unity that he identified in his Makassae paradigm. He paid little attention to the terms “religion” or “animism”, and so he eschewed Durkheimian functionalism. That said, Forman allowed himself a minimal level of comparison: “people across a range of societies deal with the threat of death, and irrespective of whether they speak of an afterlife, reincarnation or ‘lingering souls’, their common denominator is to reject finality and emphasise continuity” (Forman 1980: 163). “Makassae funerary and mortuary rituals,” Forman continued, were “both a sociological and a symbolic statement to this effect.”

Life among Forman’s Makassae was generated through the mixing of two bloods and two sperms, both of which were produced

in male and female bodies through the transformation of food. Because bridewealth consisted of water buffalo, horses and swords, these constituted a transfer of "the means of production" that was employed to till Mother Earth (the soil) and cultivate food, "the child of Mother Earth". The food then came back to the wife-givers as critical life-generating counter-gifts, namely cooked rice and pork, which in turn were "transformed in the bodies of both husband and wife into 'blood and sperm', the intermixing of which [was] the basis for successful reproduction" (pp. 160–1).

The same relationship extended in a homologous fashion to the cultivation of food itself, which came about through the union of Mother Earth and Father Sky. Both the propagation of plants and the growing of food—"the child of Mother Earth"—were produced through the exchange of "blood" (rain) and "sperm" (dew) between Father Sky and Mother Earth. Sperm, or dew, was absorbed through the plants' leaves, while blood, or rain, drained seawards in rivulets through the veins of Mother Earth "where male and female 'blood' combined to rise up in the clouds and then returned to earth again as life-giving rain" (blood). Agricultural production, also conceived of as exchange, was therefore a homology of sexual reproduction (Forman 1980: 152–3, 160–1, 1981: 101).

But did this mean that Father Sky actually impregnated Mother Earth? Forman wondered. "We [the Makassae] suspect that they [Father Sky and Mother Earth] lie together at night while we sleep, but we cannot know for sure; we only see dew [sperm] on her [Mother Earth] in the morning," one informant suggested (Forman 1980, 342n12; see also Traube 1986: 263n6). Forman guessed that the Makassae considered sexual intercourse to be private business and were not prepared to consider what Father Sky and Mother Earth got up to at night. That the Timorese were incorrigibly promiscuous, as José Martinho and Abílio José Fernandes had emphasised, was a world away from Forman's thought.

Production and reproduction, furthermore, were more than just homologies of each other in the explanatory sense. Rather, they were materially connected, for blood (rain) and dew (sperm) produced life (plants and food) which, when consumed, were transformed inside their bodies as the vital blood and sperm required to spawn offspring. After people died and were buried in the womb of Mother Earth (the earth), their bodies decayed, and this decaying was similarly a generative force that gave life to plants when mixed with rain (Father Sky's blood) and dew (his sperm) (Forman 1980: 161). The "unitary

theme of these three explanations [was], of course, that male and female blood and sperm [were] exchanged in the process of death to continue the chain of life," Forman wrote (p. 164). Mortuary rituals and their symbolic and material exchanges were therefore crucial to the cycle of life and death. In symbolic terms, the body returned to Mother Earth. In sociological terms, the rituals ensured that alliances between wife-givers and wife-takers persisted after the death of the particular descent group member that had linked them in the first place (p. 163). The pattern of marital exchange was more or less replicated in mortuary exchanges such that death would not jeopardise social integration. We can see why Forman referred to all of this as "the chain of life"; either all things were linked or Forman devised a way to link them (or both).

In what I consider to be Forman's most brilliant if not poetic theoretical move, he suggested that these rituals compensated for what was missing in the Makassae belief system, namely the ability to explain agricultural growth and reproduction, the genesis of which required the mixing of male and female bloods and sperms.

In terms of Makassae belief, a dead man's decaying body contributed to the growth of new life. In terms of pragmatics, however, the fields had to be dug and planted. Father Sky did not penetrate Mother Earth; rather, men tilled the soil. Father Sky did not impregnate Mother Earth; men sowed seed. The dual orientation to field and hearth in this set of rituals thus offered the Makassae the key to productive organisation and to new life. That this should occur in conjunction with the major mortuary ritual is of some note for it suggests that it is precisely in the face of death that life requires reaffirmation. The rites for the preparation of sacred rice, performed in the ancestral paddies, linked human action to agricultural production, reminding the Makassae, as some of their myths seem to do, that the fertility of Mother Earth can be brought to fruition only by human intervention (Forman 1981: 105).

"These rites," Forman added, therefore tied "the product of human labour specifically to the re-enactment of the dead man's own marital alliance and, consequently, to the line of descent itself" (Forman 1980: 171-2). In the "making of the dead", the productive and reproductive paradigms come together to form "the key to new life", bringing Forman full circle back to exchange as the Makassae paradigm of life (p. 175).

Forman's interpretations can be understood as a narrative structural interplay of materialism and symbolism: what was material was also symbolic; what was symbolic was also material. Both the materiality and symbolism of exchange drove the continuity in life and cosmologically informed the Makassae life paradigm. It is "precisely at the intersection of the beliefs that support this exchange ideology, the symbolic expression of those beliefs in ritual, and the sociology of exchange, that we are most likely to find the key to understanding the Makassae social system" (pp. 153, 159). As we can see, Forman wove the explanatory texture of the Makassae life paradigm more through circular material and symbolic association than through a linear narrative of cause and effect.

The First Faux Pas

The gap between Forman's theoretical abstractions and what was happening on the ground could hardly have been wider. Several months had gone by since the Passover Seder in Canberra. Forman was pleased because the intricacies of a certain exchange among the living kin of a dead person had finally been "mastered". Just as he felt he "needed to know much more", Nanai'e announced that the American already knew enough (Forman 1976: 14). From one moment to the next, Forman's questions became taboo and his apprenticeship was terminated (Forman 2001: 3). A "special name-secreting ceremony" would now have to be held to make secret again the sacred knowledge. Forman was instructed to deliver a ram to the origin site of Turanaba'a for sacrifice on Thursday; it would have to be a ram "whose horns turned twice". Forman sent one of his gardeners off to look for the prescribed ram. In the meantime Nanai'e helped Forman put together a questionnaire "on social life and economics" while Forman resigned himself to the new situation (Forman 1976: 15).

Come Thursday at the break of day, the ram, the gardener and the anthropologist set out for Turanaba'a. They climbed past a series of lineage houses and then through a thick wood which gave onto an "impenetrable abutment" in a "strikingly defensive position" (Forman 1980: 154), a rocky shelf jutting out from the mountainside, flattened on top by excavation and dropping off precipitously on three sides. There stood ten houses of wood and thatch raised upon wooden piles. At one end, Forman observed "stunning rock formations" and at the other he could distinguish the canopy of the sacred banyan

tree, whose trunk lay rooted in the crevices below. A "treacherous path" linked the tree with the wren-turned-to-rock to the edge of a precipice where the sacred house of Moon-Sun balanced.

The house of Moon-Sun was "unpretentious in itself" and "not readily distinguishable from the house of any other ancestor". Yet,

this most sacred of all Makassae places was the locus of tremendous activity. Two huge stones, the table and chair of Moon-Sun, served as an altar, laid out with a large palm leaf, a sacred sword, and several small woven baskets containing cooked rice and meat, which would be used to call the spirits.

Nanai'e and a couple of elders sat near the altar on an "enormous stone grave". Forman cautiously edged his way along the narrow path towards them. He stepped around "a clutch of women who squatted at the outskirts of the site" in anticipation of "a ceremony from which they were ritually excluded". "*Hau mi'i*," said the men, greeting Forman as he came near. They invited him to sit with them. But now something happened that would be of crucial significance for the rest of Forman's field trip: instead of sitting down on the gravestone next to the men, he seated himself on the nearest unoccupied rock. In that instant, the ritual specialist, Koo Rubi, emitted a formidable command: "Stand up!" Forman leapt into the air, apologising. "What have I done?" he asked anxiously, after he had landed on his feet. "We cannot tell you," Koo Rubi whispered, for "the names have been secreted again." Forman "had obviously done something very wrong but the occurrence seemed to be immediately forgotten" (Forman 1976: 15). He was yet to discover that his faux pas would not be forgotten by the living, much less by the dead.

As if nothing had happened, the elders budged along so Forman could squeeze in atop the gravestone. After chatting about "life in America and poverty in Timor", the ritual began. Forman was instructed to turn on his tape recorder. Nanai'e began to chant in the ritual verse of an "Old Makassae" whose words not even he could understand (Forman 1980: 342n13); Koo Rubi called the spirits with the offerings. They begged the ancestors for forgiveness:

This stranger came and we were obliged to speak your names so that he could write them in his notes and books. I told this American, "Ours are sacred. We cannot speak them idly. After speaking them we must secrete [*sic*] them again. We must make them sacred again." Therefore, this American bought this ram



Photo 9.7 Nanai'e Nau Naha and Koo Rubi preparing for a divination. July 1974. © Shepard and Leona Forman

and brought it here to our hearth to speak your name. Now we will put your word in its place again. Your name is sacred again, and also your person (Forman 1976: 15).

While the ram was slaughtered, chickens suffocated (one chicken for each of the ten lineage founders), meat cooked and entrails divined, Forman was led off to peruse the wren-turned-to-rock in the sacred banyan tree; “an awesome sight” at which “the power and mystery of their beliefs took on new meaning”. As Koo Rubi recounted the origin myth, Forman produced his camera. As before, he only took slides “lest anyone possess their most sacred object”.

As the solemnities wrapped up, the men scrambled up to the barren ridge-top where the women had prepared a feast. Two “secular chiefs” joined them. Between the ritual elders who sat at the altar and Forman and the secular chiefs who sat on the ground, was a third group of lineage men “devouring the meat and guzzling *ma buti*, the wine of the sago palm”. (Forman makes no mention of a division between “political authority” and “spiritual authority” and in a personal communication suggested that no such division existed. Who, then, were the secular chiefs?) Forman and the chiefs drank “*ma sabu*, a distilled version” of the same wine that was “far more

potent". Tipsily they "talked and joked until the sun dipped behind the hills". Finally, they "parted with the warmest of Makassae leave-takings, two-handed clasps all around".

An Unexpected Visitor

Over the following weeks Nanai'e helped Forman with the collection of data based on the lengthy questionnaire they had already put together about agriculture and economic exchange. Now it was Saturday. Forman was blissfully unaware that something was brewing in the spirit world, for in the world of the living all appeared to be going well: the family now felt very comfortable among their Makassae friends; Forman had completed about 20 questionnaires; anxieties about Leona's sickness had been dispelled by the common cold it turned out to be; and, that particular afternoon, the young children played cheerfully under the shade of the veranda. Inside the house, Forman was organising some notes when he glimpsed something coiled up on his sweater resting on the back of a chair. Just as he made to remove it ... "Cobra!" he screamed, jumping back.

[The snake] dropped to the floor and slithered quickly away from me as I ran toward the door on the opposite wall. "Snake!" I yelled to my children, who fled the veranda ... One of the gardeners and some of the household staff came running to the house, where the snake was now curled around our shortwave radio on a table. *Baneleke!* they yelled, obviously sharing my excitement and fear. They asked me if they should kill this highly venomous creature. "Kill it indeed" ... (Forman 1976: 16).

After more than a year among the Makassae, Forman had learned that this viper was the deadliest of all. The Makassae had a folklore about it (cf. Correia 1934: 67). This was the snake that lived in trees and would hurl itself down upon cattle and horses, blinding its victims. Any man who encountered this fatally venomous snake would run for his life. The anthropologist did not hesitate to have his gardener impale it with a dibble stick. Any husband and father would have done likewise.

Villagers heard the hullabaloo and assembled outside the Forman abode. As they entered into animated discussion about the snake, its serpent character and conduct, they concurred that "it was unheard of that the snake should appear in a house". Speculation was unleashed on the reason behind the anomalous event. One man,

for example, held that the snake's presence was intended to issue an ominous warning that somebody determined to kill the American family had laid poison in the house. The man dashed off to fetch his uncle, who would perform the appropriate counter-magic (Forman 1976: 16). (The uncle never appeared.)

Another of the gardeners, Anu Loi, showed up just as the limp snake was receiving its burial. After the events had been explained to him, his brows furrowed. There was no time to lose! Anu Loi

immediately sat down on our veranda and began to divine. Putting the index finger and thumb of his left hand together, he placed them on his right wrist, then slid his extended thumb along his forearm and drew up his index finger until it touched the thumb. When the fingers touched, he muttered the name of a spirit or an enemy. He repeated these steps as he moved his fingers slowly up toward his shoulder. He then started back down his arm until his thumb and index finger finally reached the crook of his elbow. There he stopped. The name he spoke was *Turanaba'a*.

By way of Anu Loi's dextrous operation—closely watched by the American who by now was more embroiled in the spirit beliefs of the Makassae life paradigm than an anthropologist could ever wish for—it was revealed that the viper had been sent from the origin house as a messenger to Forman to advise him that another sacrifice was warranted to make amends for his having seated himself on the headstone of the first Makassae ancestor. The sacrificial creature would have to be a pig, Forman heard the gardener say.

Eager for a second opinion (particularly about the pig), Forman sent for Nanai'e, who eventually appeared at the door. After a private consultation, Nanai'e confirmed the story with some refinements: an ant had come inside the house and had then assumed the form of the snake that then coiled around the sweater. The proper course of action, Nanai'e counselled, would have been to use sweet rice to lure the snake outside, upon which it could return peacefully to the origin site. A new sacrificial ritual was called for. Koo Rubi was sent for to decide the details. Following Koo's arrival there was yet more deliberation. "The snake had meant no harm," Koo announced. "Wait," he paused a moment, "another snake will come to affirm the message." Everybody finally departed. Night had fallen and the Formans turned in. But they could not sleep, because they knew that at the market the next day all eyes would be on them.



Photos 9.8 & 9.9 After the fire at Turanaba'a. July 1974. © Shepard and Leona Forman

Early the next morning, the Formans headed for the market. Others, laden with produce, were on the same path. Suddenly, pandemonium broke out. The Formans stared dumbfounded as people erupted in screams, dropping their belongings and running off. The Formans then turned and noticed that the thatched roof of Sahe Raku's house was ablaze. Gusty winds fanned the flames that now hopped from house to house. The fire rapidly engulfed a series of lineage sites all the way up the mountain to Turanaba'a and the house of Moon-Sun.

The devastation included the entire origin site and nearby enclaves, 21 lineage houses and two ancestral hearths. In the tearful revelations that ensued, "more than 100 families told of losing their most important possessions". This had been the worst fire "in living memory". Although the immediate cause—a stray spark from a hearth—was readily apparent, "efficient cause is not sufficient cause for the Makassae", deduced Forman, knowing that the *who*, not just the *what*, had to be ascertained. A divination was therefore called for "to know why the fire had to occur at all and which ancestor had to be placated so that it would not occur again". The ritual was scheduled for the next day at Turanaba'a. Nanai'e gave Forman no choice but to attend.

Obligingly, Forman arose before dawn to trudge back up the mountain. As he emerged from the wood out onto the abutment where the origin site stood, he found Nanai'e laying out 26 stones in a ring and using a string to position each one equidistant from a central sacred sword thrust in the ground. Nanai'e then hobbled around the circle of stones, designating to each one the name of a particular ancestor or living enemy. Forman listened intently for Nanai'e to assign a stone to his name. He recognised the name of the founder of Sahe Raku's house and the name of Sahe Raku's son. The anthropologist's relief was palpable when the last stone was given a name that was clearly not his. Forman, it seemed, would be spared the blame. Then,

just as the first rays of sunlight fell on the circle of stones, a young rooster that had not yet sung was hand-fed a few grains of sacred rice and held up to the fading moon and the rising sun. The end of the cord that extended from the spear was looped around one foot. *Nai suma!* ("choose a name!") he was told, and with a sudden gesture his head was severed from his body and he was left to writhe in the circle of stones until he died atop the telltale one or in the center, which marked the area of Moon-Sun's will.

"In a moment it was over": the rooster came to rest between the stones assigned to the founder of Sahe Raku's house and her son. Sahe Raku was responsible because she had allowed her roof to fall into disrepair, while her son was also responsible because he had never complied with the injunction to sacrifice a pig after he had been found stealing his uncle's rice. Now that culpability had been ascertained, it was time to discuss the appropriate punishment. Nanai'e glanced over at Forman and "smiled wanly, and winked" conspiratorially.

Later, Forman asked about the wink and why he had not been designated a stone, to which Nanai'e responded, "I know how that would have come out and I could not bear the responsibility" (Forman 1976: 18). Forman would note in one of his essays that Nanai'e "no doubt placed his own gloss on ritual", but perhaps that was an understatement (Forman 1980: 342n5); Nanai'e, the guardian of traditions, had assumed the role of Forman's guardian too. Apparently, the rooster had put his own gloss on ritual as well, for unable to locate a stone for Forman, he had chosen the next most culpable option: Sahe Raku and son.

A Premature Retreat and the Politics of Tense

Privately, nobody doubted that the true responsibility was Forman's, first for sitting on the headstone, then for killing the ant-turned-to-snake and finally for bringing on the fire that had devastated many homes and the local Makassae's most sacred site, including the house of Moon-Sun. Forman's research became a strain amidst polite but distant locals; for all they knew, his next misdeed might spell the end of them all. Forman "returned to simpler pursuits". He studied the layout of rice fields, perfected his Makassae and taught Nanai'e's son how to transcribe Makassae ritual language in phonetic script (Forman 2001: 3). Gradually, Forman's unenviable status in Lakoliu led him to lose heart, and it was not long before he and Leona thought of leaving Quelicai. As the subtitle of "Spirits of the Makassae" would suggest, the "vengeful dead" would hasten their departure.

"Spirit agency"—as one might call it nowadays—was not the whole story. It was, by this time, late in 1974. The political situation had been "heating up". Rudimentary political parties with their diverse agendas had begun to hold rallies at the market. The Forman couple became afraid for the safety of their children, particularly after one rally when a prominent Fretilin leader indicated that a CIA

agent could be in their midst. Aware of the risk of being drawn into politics, the American family returned home to the United States.

Once back in Michigan, Forman resumed his routine teaching and writing:

I began a book about the Makassae and wrote several articles about their way of life and the belief system that guided it. I began to put in order the materials that I immodestly hoped could become the Makassae Haggadah. But perhaps foolishly, I suspended all that after the Indonesians invaded East Timor. Matebian, the last region to be pacified by the Portuguese, also became the center of East Timorese resistance. As a result, it bore the brunt of intense fighting beyond the terror that all of East Timor experienced.

The Formans sent provisions (mainly boxes of seed) off to East Timor. Shepard Forman himself made appeals to the International Committee of the Red Cross, wrote letters to Congress (1978) and "spoke to anyone who cared to listen to the terrible things that were befalling the people of East Timor". His, however, was "a voice in the wilderness", he realised disconsolately (Forman 2001: 3).

Later, Forman resumed his writing and would go on to publish three book chapters (1977, 1980, 1981) in English and another in Portuguese. There are a few oddities about the second one, "Descent, Alliance and Exchange Ideology", which appeared in James Fox's (ed.) *The Flow of Life* (1980). First, although Nanai'e had been added as co-author on the draft version (see Forman 1977: 286), his name was removed from the published version. Had Forman's will to share authorship dissolved? Was it because Forman believed Nanai'e to be dead and therefore in no need of co-authorship? Or was it an editorial decision?³ Second, the ethnographic component of the chapter was set in the present tense as if the Makassae were still living their life paradigm, as if "the flow of life" was still flowing along uninterrupted, much as it always had, in a political vacuum of timeless, paradigmatic, self-contained "culture" (see Fabian 1983). Third, in Forman's chapter as in Fox's entire volume, no mention was made of the Indonesian invasion despite the fact that four chapters were devoted to various ethnolinguistic groups belonging to or straddling the border area of what had been Portuguese Timor. The omission was, no doubt, an editorial choice that reflected the new postcolonial contexts with which the discipline of field-based anthropology as a whole had to contend. In respect to Indonesia

in particular, the "New Order" dictatorship would refuse research approval to foreign anthropologists who publicly undermined its façade of democracy or, in particular, drew attention to the true extent of the devastation, bloodshed and famine in East Timor.

One could easily overlook the silence in *The Flow of Life*, given that this was a volume on "culture", not politics. The use of the "ethnographic present" tense, moreover, was common then, and should not be considered unusual in itself. Yet, Forman's subsequent publication (1981) rather dramatises the institutional silence of anthropology at the Australian National University, the politics of verbal tense and the topical limitations imposed through or on the notion of culture. Forman's "Life Paradigms", which appeared the following year (1981), was framed as a commemoration of the Makassae system of production and exchange *at the time of fieldwork*:

There is little likelihood that this system now survives as such ... In fact, to celebrate life with the Makassae at the present time is nothing less than audacious. In the four years since December 1975, when Indonesian troops invaded East Timor in order to quash an independence movement, extraordinary death and destruction have been reported. Reliable newspaper accounts suggest that the island's native populations, estimated at approximately 650,000 in 1974, have been reduced by at least 15—and perhaps as much as 50—per cent under Indonesian occupation. In order to reduce support for and cut off food supplies to guerrilla mountain redoubts, the Indonesian government supplemented sophisticated weaponry with the forced location of non-combatants to coastal encampments, deliberately disrupting native culture and producing widespread famine. Some accounts report the near total depopulation of formerly populous mountain regions ... As with other ethnolinguistic groups of East Timor ... [those Makassae] who have not been killed outright have been removed forcibly from their traditional lands, and the cycle of production and exchange which reproduces life has been broken. Their means of livelihood has been taken from them, and their mode of life effectively destroyed (Forman 1981: 97).

This chapter (Forman 1981) went on to cover empirical ground covered in the preceding one (Forman 1980), but in a tense that corresponded to the fact that "their mode of life [had been] effectively destroyed". As for the Makassae Haggadah, Forman felt that there was no longer much point to finishing it, for the last brief message he had received from Nanai'e was in early 1976. Recognising the

phonetic script that he had taught to Nanai'e's son, the three lines read: *There is no food. We are all dying. Please help us* (Forman 2001: 3).

After the referendum in 1999, Forman returned to East Timor to help the United Nations Development Program formulate their assistance measures. Given high security concerns, his visit to Quelicai was brief. However, he returned to East Timor with his son, Jacob, for the independence ceremonies of 2002. They spent an afternoon in Quelicai and met a number of the people they had come to know 28 years earlier. Said Shepard Forman in a personal communication: "It was very emotional, especially when Aquiles' daughter realised that she and Jacob had been playmates as toddlers. She hugged us and cried the tears of the lost years of occupation and her father's assassination." Finding his former house intact and remembering back to 1973 and 1974 when his genealogies had stretched from wall to wall across the living room, Shepard Forman entertained the idea of reconstructing the genealogies. He recalled, again with wonder, the day Nanai'e spotted the Jewish Haggadah on his desk; even now, he regrets that the Makassae Haggadah was never delivered.

10

The Detective (An ethnography of intimacy)

"The Mambai symbolic world is a powerful one, in which deep truths are articulated in an idiom of heavy, brooding mysticism. To sever the structure of the ideas from the nuances of their expression would be to lose something essential to a full appreciation of their meaning" (Traube 1980: 351n2). These words set the tone for the ethnography of American anthropologist Elizabeth Traube, who strove to retain those nuances of expression as she moved from the field data to their textualisation. Yet, Traube's nuances extended from the objects of investigation to her personal experiences as a young female foreigner closely attended by a pair of heavy, brooding, male, Mambai informants. This chapter explores how animism-with-intimacy entered "a slow spiralling" that unfolded in "myth-like style" as much in the field as in her poetic *Cosmology and Social Life: Ritual Exchange among the Mambai of East Timor*, published in 1986 (Traube 1980: 354n16).

Traube travelled to Portuguese Timor in October 1972. Under the doctoral supervision of James Fox (then at Harvard), a set of distinctly unpoetic ideas travelled with her: dual classification, semantic parallelism and dyadic ritual language (Fox 1975, 1980, 1988). These concepts had been applied to different groups across eastern Indonesia and were expected to be relevant to Portuguese Timor too. Some of Traube's theoretical moves had already been pioneered by Fox in his studies of Rotinese ritual language (Fox 1971, 1974, 1975): symbolic categories were ordered into pairs of complementary opposites: male/female; heaven/earth; above/below; outside/inside; black/white, and so on (Traube 1986: 4); these categories were

"asymmetric" in that one term was typically superior to the other. Semantic parallelism of complementary, asymmetric pairs similarly infused ritual contexts among the Mambai, noted Traube, giving meaning to everyday life and action; the exchanges between living and dead kin, moreover, ran parallel to the asymmetric exchanges between wife-giving and wife-taking groups.

Indeed, intersecting the study of language, ritual and myth, Traube would come to understand her topic in light of Marcel Mauss' (Émile Durkheim's nephew) "model of exchange based on the simultaneous presence of multiple aspects in any transaction". She would aim to "reconstitute the whole", present "the social reality ... in the totality of interlacing meanings conveyed by ritual practices", and describe the "total character of ritualized exchange contracts that link persons with other persons, social groups with other groups, and human beings with the cosmos" (pp. 2-4). Like Shepard Forman (see Chapter Nine), Traube would construe that totality through material and symbolic exchange; for her as for him, everything was bound up in a "whole".

This approach meant that no single term such as *lulik*, or the Mambai *luli*, would dominate Traube's thought. *Lulik* belonged to a clump of words that signified boundaries, and "as a provisional gloss", she translated it as "sacred" and "prohibited", whose referents were primarily objects, places and food (p. 142). Providing an answer to colonial magistrate Alberto Osório de Castro's (2004: 415) query of 1910 as to whether a mountain *had lulik* or *was lulik*, Traube stressed that *lulik* was not an inherent property. An object or place was rendered *lulik* "through ritual treatment" and it was therefore "in performance that the elements of sacredness and prohibition" emerged. *Lulik* things were generally to be avoided, except in ceremonial times when contact with the sacred had to be mediated by the "priestly master, who imposes his ministrations between the objects and the worshipers" (Traube 1986: 142). Where *lulik* designated food prohibitions, it contrasted to *sau* meaning "free of prohibition". But Traube did not convert *lulik* and *sau* into a deep structural division of the Mambai religion between "the sacred" and the "the secular" as David Hicks (1976) had done for the Tetum religion. In fact, Traube, like Forman, rejected the notion that she was studying religion at all. Following Mauss, she recoiled from stark classificatory divisions—religious, social, material, supernatural, secular—that belonged to the Durkheimian tradition. Evidently, she preferred the open, inclusive idea of cosmology.

If *lulik* held no pride of place in Traube's "total Mambai system", two other concepts did. The first to be recruited was the metaphor of "rock and tree", which denoted sacred place. "Rock and tree", in Traube's narrative, defined the indigenous object of study (as *lulik* or religion had for others). Traube's second conceptual recruit was the knowledge metaphor of "trunk and tip", which underlay the Mambai concern with "an original plenitude", an "ideally attainable whole", "bits and pieces" of which were expressed in ritual. She detected in the trunk the words of truth and history, a "verbal treasure" emanating from "the stomach", with language "as both the vehicle and the content of the whole" and "the whole [being that which] one recovers from the parts". The whole was contrasted with "the tip"—a symbolic "branching out into diversity from an original unity"—but also encompassing it—"the whole is said to consist of what we would call a narrative text ... a story that runs 'from trunk to tip', binding together past and present". In addition to rock and tree, "the trunk" and "the whole" were highly useful "native tropes" given their resonance with what Traube thought of less as a "Timorese culture" and more as a specific "Mambai culture" (Traube 1986: 6–7).

This "whole" was subject to "strategies of purification" (Latour 1993). That is, Traube decided what content to insert into the whole, what to remove from it, and how to naturalise the boundary. In this respect, the reader of *Cosmology* faces a paradox: Traube constructs an essentialist view of culture, for the whole is ever present, yet she persistently undoes her own essentialist categories. No sooner does the author evoke images of a cultural integrity, than she concedes that theirs was no "untouched culture": "its apparent wholeness was in many ways a transient product of discourse". In particular, "the timeless character to this study" resulted from "its focus on the internal dynamics of Mambai social life and neglects Mambai interactions with a larger world, except as that world was embodied by me" (Traube 1986: xx). So, she rather ignored what she did not want intruding into her study, and in this she was rather more like Forman (see Chapter Nine) than Hicks (see Chapter Eight); yet she openly acknowledged that she *was* ignoring things, and in this she was more like Hicks than Forman.

Inclusions and exclusions were mainly matters of the present, not of the past leading up to it. *Cosmology* therefore represents a predominantly synchronic study conceived of as "an aesthetic appreciation for the coherence of Mambai culture". And yet, Traube understood that the "effort required to produce that [cultural] coherence" is

an "ethnographic strategy". So, while she claims to do her "best to put aside the nostalgic faith in plenitude that first led [her to the Mambai]", the success of that effort is only equal to the number of qualifications she offers (p. xx); quite fairly, she acknowledges that *Cosmology* comes as "a one-sided view of Mambai society, and that more intensive research with those who exercise political power would have brought competing views into focus" (p. xvi). In this statement we glimpse an important dyadic, asymmetric pair in Traube's method, namely her contrast between "political power" and "spiritual power". Had she examined political power too, she could not have avoided thinking more about history; and had she thought more about history, she would likely have questioned the categorical fixity of the dyad itself (cf. Schulte Nordholt 1971: 426).

One suspects that Traube's inner Fox kept her clinging to ahistorical dyadic language, which she explores through three types of white ritual (agricultural, harvest and sacred house-building rites) and black (relating to death) ritual. Traube, after all, was not one to reinvent her research objectives in the field. If she admits to a deferential quality in her nature, that quality concerned not only her now-distant supervisor but also her now-proximate informants. She says her fieldwork was "shaped by an interplay between instructions that I received from my ... acquaintances and certain intellectual and personal dispositions of my own, including a tendency that I have to follow ... instructions". As she moved between different ritual performances, she "was urged to look for what Mambai call the 'trunk' of ritual practices": "I too came to feel not only that this allegedly concealed base was obtainable, but that it indeed represented the true goal of my research" (Traube 1986: ix-x). Such personal revelations that fill *Cosmology's* preface are just the tip of the iceberg. In all, *Cosmology* is a wonderfully reflexive work, permitting the reader to gain a deep sense of the interpretive complexity and irony involved in getting a handle on this exceedingly ephemeral trunk. "Although most individuals simply directed me elsewhere to acquire full understanding [of 'trunk']," Traube explained, "their persistent affirmations of the possibility came to dominate my field investigations, until it seemed to me too that the promised fullness lay just ahead of me, almost in reach, yet always deferred" (p. 7). We will find out just how much a mirage, or a "perpetually deferred narrative", trunk turned out to be (pp. 7-8). But I am jumping ahead, because if Traube's quest for "trunk" was about the search for cultural plenitude, she had to suffer first to eliminate the spectre of non-plenitude.



Photo 10.1 Elizabeth Traube meets Shepard Forman in Dili in August, 1973.
© Shepard and Leona Forman



Photo 10.2 Elizabeth Traube. Time, place and activity unknown. © Shepard and Leona Forman

Escape from Non-Plenitude

Traube began fieldwork among the lowland Galoli, in the town of Laleia (Manatuto). Had Traube read Margaret King's *Eden to Paradise*, she may have thought twice about going there for other reasons: "Laleia in local dialect means Heaven," averred King (1963a: 110), but "whoever named this village had either a warped sense of humour or a poor sense of direction." Traube admits that Laleia had been "arbitrarily selected". (It would seem likely, though, that Fox nudged her in that direction given his own interest in the Galoli.) She found the place mundane: it was full of Catholic, fluent Portuguese-speakers and "acculturated natives" with barely a tradition in sight. Nevertheless, she remained there "fretting in the oppressive heat of the town", studying Galoli "half-heartedly". She befriended a young woman named Joanna (probably an acculturated native) who "had the kind of gaiety and high spirits that I too possess in better times". Traube grew "deeply dependent" on Joanna. Yet over five months, she became unhappier by the day, so much so that she commenced "intermittent drifting across Timor in search of a new place". That brought her to Same, which "seemed to offer everything that Laleia lacked".

Talking with reserved and dignified Mambai elders, peering into stately sacred houses almost palpably laden with meaning, visiting quiet shrines centred around great rocks and trees, I sensed the plenitude of a rich traditional culture. Mambai life, from what little I glimpsed of it on this rapid tour, seemed exotic, mysterious, other, and above all, full and intact.

Returning to Laleia and sheltering again in Joanna's friendship, Traube had to decide whether to trade in "her one true friend" for "a handful of rituals" (Traube 1986: xi). She chose the rituals, albeit with trepidation, for however much "the Mambai attracted [her], they frightened [her]" (p. xii); she was yet to learn, though, that she frightened them as well (Traube 1980: 352n3).

Since she had become acquainted with the district administrator of Aileu, Traube moved not to Same but to the outskirts of Aileu township. She settled into the household of the village chief. She learned Mambai from one of his daughters and initiated her first forays to the nearby village of Selo. When the rice harvest came round, she tagged along with the chief's wife, Adão Inan, "observ[ing], without understanding them, the simple harvest rites". Late one night,

Adão Inan roused Traube from her sleep to attend a post-burial ritual: "Let us go, Menina. We shall see many things." A "sense of mutual excitement and shared discovery" imbued those experiences, Traube recalls. "Menina" (Miss), as everybody called Traube, learned quickly, her logs accumulated, and soon knew more about ritual than did Adão Inan—"I became her informant" (1986: xiii).

Traube left Selo and headed for the ritual centres of "rock and tree", Hohul and Raimaus, where she hoped to find a wise old woman willing to teach her. Hohul had "a designated 'door', and that door [was] Raimaus", whose people were reputed to "know many words" (p. xiv). One frequent visitor to Raimaus was Mau Balen, a man in his early thirties, who resided in Selo with his two wives (and who, given the chance, probably would have taken a lovely foreign *menina* as his third) but went to Raimaus "unfailingly" for all ritual occasions in his inherited capacity as a "ritual master". Says Traube, Mau Balen "clearly loved to talk", "he had an expressive voice that would sink to a whisper when he wished to explain some particularly important point", and he "urgently wanted to make me understand him" (p. xv).

Initially, Traube barely understood Mau Balen. Her "linguistic shortcomings" were compounded by her "lack of familiarity with [his] poetic language ... and ... the sheer unfamiliarity of the story that he was unfolding"; many months would pass before she "understood the narrative structure underlying the scrawled texts that had filled two notebooks by the end of that week". Nevertheless, she "learned the names of the sacred rocks and trees in Hohul and Raimaus ... began to acquire some idea of the relationship between Father Heaven and Mother Earth, and ... learned that certain questions provoke[d] tense silences, followed by abrupt shifts of subject". The silences and abrupt shifts can only have been highly alluring, for the young Traube quickly forgot the wise old woman and contracted Mau Balen as her research assistant, paying him \$40 a month (pp. xiv-xvi).

Another man appeared, Mau Bere, who made a strong impression on Traube. He was the eldest son of a ritual priest in Hohul and he too "had words". While only in his late twenties, he was "a man of stature" who commanded respectful attention. At their first meeting, Traube invited him to return to discuss matters. He came back almost immediately, intending, "with sadness", to "entrust his words to [her] that one night and then to withdraw". Writes Traube: "His speech, which I recorded on tape, shows the strains of such an endeavour and alternates between elliptical allusions and barrages of

detail" (p. xvii). Something, however, changed Mau Bere's mind, for he kept returning night after night. When Traube offered to employ him, he breathlessly accepted. Traube pondered: "Had he lost his sadness? Had he seen the economic and social advantages of the position? Did he consider it improper for Mau Balen of Raimaus to be my sole guide?" As she contracted Mau Bere as her second research assistant, and cemented what she describes as "a new triangular partnership", the one question that Traube might have asked herself, but did not deem it fit for her monograph, was: "Had Mau Bere fallen in love with me, just as Mau Balen seemed to have done?" Elsewhere, Traube acknowledges that "a trust grew up" between the three of them; "I hope that I have not violated it," mused Traube, tempting the reader of *Cosmology* to conjecture on the basis of numerous inferences that suggest a certain level of intimacy (and guilt) in Traube's recollection.¹

However reflexive we may take *Cosmology* to be, the author only whets the reader's appetite for the unknowable erotic subjectivity that is mostly taboo in ethnographic writing, a trunk meticulously tucked away while pursuing the trunks of others (Kulick and Wilson 1995). So, after Mau Balen and Mau Bere both pledged "to speak their words from trunk to tip", what was really entailed when the three "lived together, ate together, laughed together, fought together, and ... worked together"? They became friends, says Traube. Yet the three-way "relationship was not without its strains". The tentative Traube discloses this much:

I am not sure if "jealousy" is an accurate description of the tension that I began to detect between Mau Balen and Mau Bere, but I found as time went on that we formed two dyads as often as one triad. When we ventured off to distant places, then we clustered together as in the first weeks. But when we took up residence in Raimaus during the lengthy house-building rites, each of the two men took to conferring with me privately. In the last weeks of my stay, when I used our imminent parting to pressure them for "missing words", the rift became pronounced. Mau Bere said he would speak his last words to me alone, without Mau Balen present (Traube 1986: xvii).

How could their imminent parting be used to pressure her two friends for missing words? If the missing words can be construed as a parting gift to Traube, one wonders what feelings, reciprocities, emotional asymmetries, manipulation and mix of rivalry and desire fed the giving and acquisition of this ultimate gift.

In the meantime, the crowd of three embarked on a "continual ritual circuit" that took up most of Traube's second year in Timor. During ritual performances Mau Balen and Mau Bere offered "on-the-spot exegeses", and after ritual events they transcribed and interpreted recordings, deciphering the "slurred dyadic poetry" of the Mambai priests. They participated in interviews, but, says Traube, they were liable to become "arrogant and domineering" with diffident informants: "Several times I had to rebuke them for openly displaying their incredulity, or for badgering and bullying recalcitrant speakers" (p. xviii).

Traube appears not to suspect that the men were vying for her attention. She does, however, note the significance to them of her inescapable outsider position:

I was always "Menina", a white European from across the "water and sea". I was distinguished from other foreigners only by my stubborn interest in the affairs of "rock and tree". Yet I came bearing with me the "book and pen", symbols of European identity, which are repeatedly contrasted in Mambai poetry to the sacred rock and tree. My project, as Mambai represented it, was to record with book and pen "the walk of rock and tree". The participation of Mau Balen and Mau Bere worked to incorporate this unusual project into a larger, familiar cultural concern with the acquisition of cultural knowledge (pp. xviii-xix).

Her points are well taken, but we must confront Traube's stubborn modesty. Her interest in rock and tree was just the tip of what separated her from other Europeans: she was a young woman, she was living among them, she had learned their language. A young, snow-white, Mambai-speaking American *menina* living, eating, laughing and sleeping with them cannot have failed to be extremely exotic, beautiful, intriguing, desirable and dangerous to the Mambai.² In this light, Traube's reflections on the question of why the Mambai, and particularly her two informants, wanted to open to her the door to "rock and tree" at all might seem romantic, in the wrong sense of the term:

I believe that Mambai saw in me a wanderer who had returned to the homeland in search of her origins, a seeker after a treasure that they had long held in keeping. That perception provoked among them a measure of alarm, for Mambai are chary of their knowledge, and they take great pride in their status as unique custodians of a past that others have forgotten. Yet one cannot

be long among them without detecting an anxious apprehension that *they themselves are included in what has been forgotten*. Hence there was also, I believe, a measure of relief at obtaining, in a would-be receiver of knowledge, a chance to tell their story. My persistent questions, shaped as much by their enigmatic replies as by any prior interests of my own, allowed them to recreate and renew their sense of themselves through sharing it with an outsider (p. xix) [emphasis added].

I defer till later Traube's view that she was perceived as a returned wanderer. As for the rest, Traube might be faulted for contriving to underplay just how much the Mambai "culture" had corroded—not as much as Hicks' Tetum culture (Chapter Eight), but certainly much more than Forman's Makassae of Matebian (Chapter Nine). Perhaps one could say that doubt, and not just "forgetting", about the place and veracity of Mambai beliefs in a rapidly changing world had entered Mambai consciousness—*they themselves are included in what has been forgotten*; centuries of colonial and ecclesiastical subjection and the unrelenting casting of aspersions on *lulik* had unsteadied the Mambai in their own convictions; Raimaus and Hohul were islands of concentrated tradition, encroached upon by a rising tide of acculturation's scepticism; old Mambai identity was under siege, and many were no longer certain of what they knew or whether it was worth knowing; ritual was increasingly neglected and European values, including religion, increasingly prevalent. And in relation to Mau Balen and Mau Bere, however much they were absorbed by their American *menina* and could use their esoteric knowledge to beguile her with snippets of content that so obviously obsessed her, much more was at stake. In Traube they saw a glimmer of legitimacy to something that had long been dismissed as puerile superstition at best and, at worst, a pernicious, cultish obstruction to the civilising mission; even those most intimately involved in ritual practice did not escape a certain ambivalence. Mau Balen, himself a highly respected ritual master, "would often tell me that his extended dealings with foreigners had drawn him away from the world of rock and tree". To discover Traube treating rock and tree with greater reverence than any outsider had ever done before must have seemed truly remarkable.

Much of the Mambai "doubt" was simply cut out of Traube's presentation. Traube's totality was not only achieved by her turning away from political authority, but also by overlooking the ambivalence of even those most immersed in ritual authority. Her invocation

of Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) might be considered strategic: the "observer's model"—being "the substitute required by someone who cannot achieve competence through performance"—may be more systematised (or reductive) than the "practical mastery" achieved by insiders; their "system" is "a system of more or less integrated generative principles". Traube (1986: 6) notes that perhaps her two research assistants were complicit in outsider "over-systematization". One suspects that Traube selectively used over-systematised local voices in order to hedge her image of a Mambai cultural purity. If this is the case, this narrative process lies well concealed, for Traube was highly attentive to the interpersonal subtleties through which she arrived at knowledge of the Mambai. This is most pronounced in her presentation of how she made sense of the Mambai story of creation or the "cosmogonic myth", which must, by any standard, be considered a brilliant piece of reflexive scholarship. It demonstrates with great perspicacity how the ethnographer managed people, knowledge, feelings and situations in order to get to the bottom of a myth of creation, which, as we will see, could never have materialised in the way it did without the ethnographer.

Traube never heard "a coherent story of creation" at any one sitting. But she was persuaded that one did exist because she kept hearing "fragments" of stories: a meeting between Heaven and Earth; dry land emerging from water; long dark nights then sudden bursts of light; umbilical cords snapping and splitting; a black upper earth and a white lower earth, "and so on, and so on". Traube's "interpretive activities came to take the form of a quest for a full story which, it seemed, would support, anchor, and unify the fragmented speech" that she recorded (p. 31). "But is there such a narrative text?" asks Traube, and "Does a full account of creation exist?" Although she goes on to present one (pp. 36–44), it is preceded by several pages detailing the interactions between herself and her primary informants-cum-friends-cum-suitors that are crucial to understanding the degree to which the cosmogonic myth was the ethnographer's compilation and that to which it actually existed pre-ethnographically. Fortunately, Traube provides many clues that allow us to see how she lured the myth into being within the predominantly triangular context of *her ethnography*.

To begin with, Traube had no reason to query the existence of a single creation myth: "Mambai themselves speak as if there were a full narrative ... and that the trunk can, on appropriate occasions, be transmitted from a possessor to a seeker of knowledge". She could

hardly be more emphatic: "I was repeatedly instructed to pursue precisely those words that are most restricted in their circulation"; "I was told, over and over ... that I had to begin at the beginning, at the trunk"; "They told me to ask for things 'of the earth' or 'of the night', for the origin of 'dry land' from out of the 'water and sea'; "I was not to settle for things 'of the day' or 'of the tip'" (pp. 32-3). Still, if she "was provided with a key to the door of culturally significant cosmogonic events", that door had yet to be prised open.

The difficulty was to develop or stumble upon a method of procedure that elicited something more than the strained, awkward silences I all too often provoked. Indeed, it seemed at times that the more sophisticated I grew in eliciting techniques, the less success I had. Everyone would solemnly agree upon the propriety of my questions and approve the order in which they were laid out. And then out of all this harmony would come the perennial refrain: "That is what we fear to say." And after that, silence.

Traube came to sense that "Mambai collective identity [was] caught up in an idea of privileged knowledge about the cosmos". Yet, most puzzling for the ethnographer was the contradiction between their secrecy and their insistence that Traube seek and find "the words". Her process of discovery was evidently not only enthralling for Traube.

[M]y studies took on a circuslike character, with groups of onlookers hovering about the sidelines, waiting to overhear and evaluate a speaker, and perhaps also to learn from him. Such listeners would grow angry and break out into violent denunciations if they deemed the speaker's account of earth origins to be insufficient or ill-formed. "He jumps from trunk to tip, and his words do not touch," was the most frequent and bitter denunciation (p. 33).

Traube suspected that what prevailed among the Mambai was not "a coherent narrative" or origin myth, but the *idea* of one, a trunk that was never spoken, but always insinuated, dealt out in crumbs: "the creation myth is regarded as its partial manifestations"; the *idea*, moreover, "is of immense value to the Mambai" for it perpetuates "a promise of plenitude" (p. 34).

Finally, Traube is forced to concede that she contributed to the construction of the creation myth "by participating in a lengthy

process of listening and speaking, a long, twisting, and occasionally painful conversation, repeatedly interrupted by meaningful silences", all of which "took over a year to unfold". Much of it, furthermore, unfolded in the privacy of the threesome's friendship. Mau Balen and Mau Bere told

the story ... in fragments, through sudden, excited, often unplanned confidences, hasty, tumbled chronicles that left speakers and listener alike shaken and uncertain ... [There] came a variety of performances, some lengthy, others brief, some willing, others grudging, some alone, others in company, some premeditated, others abruptly triggered by an unwittingly astute query on my part.

And where did this occur, and how close were they to one another?

The settings were equally varied. We *huddled in a crevice* on a sacred mountain, with all the origin lands spread out beneath us; we *perched atop a half-built house* and talked until the wind came and frightened us; we *sat snugly* around a table in a host of mountain homes, perhaps transcribing a taped chant, discussing a ritual sequence, or simply talking of this or that, until our words led us back to the Night of creation (p. 35) [emphasis added].

Traube's exquisitely suggestive reminiscences draw the reader to conjecture that she is more concerned with poetics and romantics than with the harsh reality and frequent discomforts of fieldwork in the tropics.

In writing *Cosmology*, Traube faced a dilemma with which, in general terms, all ethnographers are familiar: she could have either presented just the fragments of the origin myth as they were recounted to her, or she could have presented the whole narrative as if "scooped up in the ethnographer's net" (p. 33). In fact she chose a middle path, making "a whole narrative" but retaining its fragmentary origins and allowing the reader to see, when permitted, the trials that engendered it. In the following section, I re-present Traube's origin myth as my encounter with Traube's text. It is worth noting that had "Mau Bere, Mau Balen, or some other very brave, or very foolish, Mambai told me the creation myth from start to finish, early in my fieldwork, it would doubtless have seemed little more to me than an interesting cosmogony". For me, Traube's cosmogony would have been yet another dull origin myth had she not enlivened its elicitation as a twisted encounter in what she felt "came to resemble a kind of

ethnographic detective work"—a work that often left our detective "disoriented, confused, and not infrequently, resentful" (p. 35).

The Myth Maker

Traube's reconstruction of the Mambai origin myth is known as "The Walk of the Earth". There is not much need to deconstruct Traube's myth, recover authorship, identify interests, point out hidden textual strategies, politicise the depoliticised, subjectify the objectified. Traube has already done so through her delivery of a sensitive interplay of myth-content and myth-context; myth-content being the sequence of textual statements through which myth unfolds as an "objective" entity removed from the research action itself; myth-context being the inter-subjective experience through which Traube comes to the myth in the first place. So, I only re-present Traube's presentation of the myth, weaving together her synthesis of content and context and, in the process, highlighting context by emphasising what may be skimmed over in the main text, relegated to other chapters or buried in footnotes. Traube warns readers against "a sense of puzzlement and perplexity" (p. 36). "The Walk of the Earth" is certainly really puzzling. I have taken the liberty to omit, paraphrase or simplify some of Traube's labyrinthine expositions on Mambai symbolism in order to make it more accessible.

The origin myth

The first line of the "Walk of the Earth" reads as follows:

In the beginning, there is a solitary being named Ina Lua.

No sooner does our raconteur of myth commence than she elicits uncertainty. "Ina" would indicate that the First Being is a mother, says Traube, but "there are suggestions that Ina Lua is hermaphroditic, and when mentioned at all, the First Being is simply called a 'person', without specification of gender". Traube continues:

Whatever this person may be, it exists alone, in a shapeless realm, prior to the differentiation of above and below. In the midst of this primordial chaos, Ina Lua moulds a woman and a man out of navel lint, and shelters them inside the hollow of its navel.

The first man and woman go by various names, and their meanings imply "rolling" and "widening". Their names "are rarely uttered",

states Traube, and they are referred to instead in ritual chant as Our Mother Earth (It Inan Raia) and Our Father Heaven (It Aman Leola).

Mother Earth quit[s] ... the formless place of origins. Impregnated by her brother [Father Heaven], she descends to an empty world and gives birth to the first "earth mound", which becomes the great mountain Tai Mai Lau [Nama Rau or Ramelau] (pp. 36–7).

In Mambai, Tai Mai Lau signifies "highest, oldest ancestor". Now, Traube says, the Mambai avoid direct references to Tai Mai Lau and invoke it obliquely with other names and verses, one of which is "Tip of the Shading Coconut Palm"; "If these ... have significance, I was unable to discover it," says our ethnographic detective, adding in a footnote that "I am not certain of the translation [for] neither Mau Balen nor Mau Bere *could* or *would* interpret the name" and that "their main concern was to identify it as a 'trick', and to stress that there are no palm trees on top of Nama Rau [Ramelau]" (p. 251n10) [emphasis added]. Noting the stress on "could" and "would", we can well imagine that Traube frequently deliberated on what her informants did know, but wouldn't tell her (or not just yet), and what they did not know, but pretended to know or promised to tell her eventually. The story proceeds:

The mountain is surrounded by whirling "water and sea" [representing the original birth fluid]. Mother Earth sits upon the summit ... she gives birth to seven smaller earth mounds, which form a tight circle around Nama Rau. Father Heaven is reunited with Mother Earth upon the top of Nama Rau.

Nama Rau is "the mountain of origins" at "the centre of the cosmos", and stands as "a primordial nexus between above and below", all of which is evoked in ritual speech by the image of rock and tree in collision: *Smash the rock; crack the tree*. Through this, Traube proposes, the relationship of the deities, Mother Earth and Father Heaven, becomes one of "complementary opposition", and out of this comes the ancestral progenitors of trees, rocks and grasses.

The ancestral trees and grasses leave their seeds for future progeny and donate their bodies to Heaven and Earth, who use them to build the first house. Known simply as Lone House (Fad Mesan), it shelters Mother Earth as she gives birth again to the first women and men (pp. 37–8).

Here, Traube draws attention to the complementary opposition of inside/outside in relation to the house. Father Heaven, who belongs to the outside, then leaves, but returns again "through the roof of the Lone House, a terrifying, shining apparition", to be embraced by his human sons, and he gives them certain objects to mark their share of "the original patrimony". He then disappears.

Abandoned once more, Mother Earth wearies of the wind and cold upon the mountain peak. She leaves the Lone House and descends to Ur Bou ... a lower mountain to the north of Nama Rau. Here, she falls ill and dies.

Although Mother Earth is now a corpse, she can still speak, and she shows Father Heaven and her children how to perform black ritual. Her children then come and cover up her prostrate body (head to the south, feet to the north, arms stretched east and west). Then:

Her subterranean movements spread out the narrow ball of earth in all four directions, pushing back the primordial waters ... For seven days and seven nights Mother Earth lies beneath the ground (p. 38).

Resisting decomposition, Mother Earth then rises and, watched over by Father Heaven, embarks on a northward journey, propped up by the seven earth mounds, finally arriving at Raimaus, where her real decomposition commences, and where she is buried again (p. 39). Then a "last thrust of the deity's head" pushes the land out in all cardinal directions and gives rise to the land of Timor, the body and tomb of Mother Earth. Nama Rau is her head, and the burial ground of Raimaus is "the perfect center", the "navel of the earth". Four earth mounds cover her, and the large banyan tree, Tai Talo, stands over the grave, the roots penetrating Mother Earth's navel deep underground and protecting her pure white milk; her decomposition is confined to the black topsoil. In ritual chant, Traube further explains, purity is represented by the white, internal milk, while fecundity and plant growth transpire in the surface-level black earth.³

The earth is now fertile but it is yet to be stable; Father Heaven, now on his way from Rama Nau to a nearby "shoulder" mountain called Us Luli, steadies the earth, and makes a motion called "the ban of the interior" (*badu hoha nin*), upon which rocks, trees, grass, earth, plants, and animals are brought to silence. He then "plants a tree and suspends a solitary leaf from its branch", thereby forming

the structure of *keora*. Explains Traube, "the sacred posts erected in every cult house are called by the same name and are described as 'twigs' of the first *keora*" (p. 40). Arriving in Us Luli, Father Heaven nominates its four guardians, who are entrusted to preside over the winds and the rains and to welcome the souls of deceased humans as they proceed to Nama Rau (p. 41). Father Heaven then fashions a paste out of shattered rocks, by which the soft land is hardened. That Mau Balen and Mau Bere compared this paste to cement is a detail that appears in a footnote (p. 251n15).

The myth thus far is presented with few references to the social situations through which the author gathered the information. Her narrative is, we could say, purified, closed or black-boxed, to borrow terms from Latour (1993). We may assume that our teller of myths does not want to bother readers with myth-context unless it seems relevant (or dramatic?). However, the door to the black box of purified myth-content is abruptly thrown open when Traube gets to the next part about the "cosmological vine".⁴ Here, she hops deftly from myth-content to myth-context, from what, firstly, "many people" or Mambai "say" or "declare", secondly, an example of chant, and thirdly, to a physical description of what any visitor ("whoever") to Raimaus will see:

[T]he sky and earth were close to each other, and many people say they were united by a vine. The motif of a vine connecting earth and sky is expressed in physiological imagery. Thus many Mambai will identify the vine with the bound umbilicals of sky and earth. There are frequent ritual allusions to a navel cord, and in their chants Mambai priests repeat:

*Cut the navel of the sky
Slice the cord of the earth
For the sky to soar on high
For the earth to sink down low*

Chanters will associate the act of separation with various places, often never identifying the site at all. But whoever goes to Raimaus will see, at the center of the village altar, an enormous hollow rock. A short distance outside of Raimaus lie three cylindrical stones that are identified as the upper, middle, and lower segments of the vine (Traube 1986: 41).

Now, however, Traube immerses the reader further in the social aspects of myth-context as content becomes contentious: not only

does she note that the nature of the vine differs in other tales, but her principal informants are drawn to disagree; and they disagree with such passion that the reader of *Cosmology* once again intuits a subtext of rival sentiments in this touchy trio of Mau Balen, Menina and Mau Bere:

[T]he motif of a joined navel was a point where Mau Balen and Mau Bere's accounts diverged from each other. Mau Balen said that when the First Being conceived in the upperworld, the placenta fell to earth and dragged the uncut cord after it. Alone with me, Mau Bere rejected the entire notion of an umbilical cord connecting the upper and lower worlds. In his final narration of the creation myth, he said that the only interconnected navels were those of the first earth mounds, the original mountains. These were tied securely one to another and never severed. Beneath the earth, the Mother holds fast to the end of the cord, to steady the land as a whole. When one hand wearies, she shifts to the other, and then the earth quakes. [...] Mau Bere insisted on his account with some vehemence:

"If the navel were cut, this land would be water. It is the navels which pull one another. All those hills out there, it is the navels which pull one another. This navel, our Mother holds it steady. That is why they trick, they say 'the navel broke and arose here, the navel snapped and arose there'. No! Our Mother holds the navel!"

For Mau Bere, the great hollow rock of Raimaus was not the navel of sky and earth but the navel-womb of the First Being, which came tumbling down to cover Mother Earth. He called it the "ancestor of all vessels" (pp. 41-2).

Inevitably, Traube and the two men became emotionally entangled in the human drama of mythical disclosures, and myth took shape accordingly.

The "Walk of the Earth" continues on for a few more pages. In brief, the following ensues: the human ancestors take a piece of pillar from the Lone House and come down from Nama Rau, eventually arriving in Raimaus, where two buffalo and two goats are sacrificed, where drums and skins are made, and where Mother Earth teaches them *keo* (ritual); when Mother Earth stretches her neck, Raimaus splits in two and Hohul is formed; to end the darkness, Mother Earth teaches her daughters to make cooking fire; the great fire is lit, and Raimaus comes to mean "the earth smokes" (*rai masu*);

the ancestors hold rituals to "wake" the pillars; a spark from the fire stings Father Heaven's eye and shoots off to become the sun; on account of the new Day, the remaining ancestors on Nama Rau take a piece of the pillar of the Lone House, scatter to the "four quarters", cultivate the lands and procreate; they learn to tell their many separate genealogies and histories as narratives of *tata* (ancestors) and *fada* (houses); the children of the four quarters follow the smoke of a cooking fire back to its source at Raimaus, where they take part in, and help pay for, Mother Earth's mortuary feast; after the feast the children return home carrying embers, pledging to return to Raimaus for forthcoming rituals; they break their promise, for they do not respect and fear Rock and Tree at Raimaus; rituals fall by the wayside until ritual specialists of Hohul gain mastery over the elements and over disease; thus empowered, they establish their authority definitively, and when their drums are sounded the children of the four quarters return as they must for ceremonies (pp. 44-5).

It appears that the extraction of each narrative event constituted an epic tale in itself. The detective was perpetually cross-referencing what she had heard before and what she was hearing now as she both put the pieces of the puzzle together and fashioned the pieces of the puzzle. For instance, when Traube heard Mau Bere's reference to Mother Earth's shifting hands and to earthquakes, she recalled the time when there was a slight earth tremor, after which Mau Bere whispered: "She has switched hands." Says Traube, "I did not understand him at the time, and he would not explain" (p. 251n17). Now she tweaks, able to make sense of something she had heard during ritual invocation: "Indeed, in chants the priests intone repeatedly: 'Hold steady, steady, steady ooo ei!'" (p. 41).

Traube also engaged in a continual cross-checking of physical phenomena and mythical substance. At Raimaus, there is a "White House" (*fad-buti nin*) and a "Black House" (*fad-meta nin*), the homes of Father Heaven and Mother Earth respectively, and although the deities do not "reside" inside, "the closest that one can draw to the lost parents is in approaching the houses of white and black" (p. 140). Different, mutually exclusive, ritual activity goes on in each house; in particular, corpses are received into the Black House, but never into the White. Linking the physical houses to myth, and then back to her informants, she adds:

The houses themselves are a visible trace of that past and are regarded as tokens of mythical types. The type of all Black Houses originates to receive a sacred corpse. And yet, when Mau

Balen and Mau Bere narrated the walk of the earth, they made no mention of any house. If I questioned them, they would contrive to locate the construction of the Black House within the narrative sequence, but if I kept silent, then they took Mother Earth to her final resting place below Raimaus without alluding to any internment of her corpse (p. 138).

This brings Traube to an analysis of the two offset social patterns in the communication of sacred knowledge. In explaining the proposition that "sacred myths are not necessarily consistent with other symbolic forms", she distinguishes two forms of Mambai knowing and experiencing "the sacred". There is, firstly, the specialised knowledge of trunk, knowledge which few possess. Secondly, there is the generalised, experiential knowledge acquired through everyday life, for example, when subjects attend vigils in the Mother's house, but may not enter the Father's house during these times. Within the latter category of, say, lay Mambai, "some may detect behind these observances an original, founding event; for others it may be enough to know that the dead who belong to the Mother are abhorrent to the Father" (p. 138). (In effect, Traube's idea comes as a rejoinder to Hicks' intuition that some ritual attendees appeared to be meaningfully engaged while others appeared to be going through the motions.) But, says Traube, "the unequal distribution of sacred knowledge" should not lead us to assume that "the ordinary participants in ritual performances are ignorant pawns, who blindly follow poorly understood instructions" since the more esoteric themes of creation also "flit through Mambai thought in homelier dress, embodied in material structures, and in the story-like musings that these structures provoke" (p. 139).

The origins of colonial rule

Not all myths were so agonising to extract as was Traube's Mambai origin myth. "The origins of colonial rule", "The Walk of Rule" (or "of the Flag") succumbed quite easily to book and pen. This myth is central to *Cosmology* (and can only be central to a book such as this one that purports to be about encounters), since it offers a major clue as to how the Mambai perceived foreigner Traube and how, equally, she came to understand her presence among them. The myth is framed by an empirical and theoretical prelude in the functional separation between ritual power—which most of *Cosmology* is about—and political power—which it is mostly not about. The said

division is common across eastern Indonesia, and here Traube cites the work of Dutch ethnographer Franciscus van Wouden (1968: 52), first published in 1935, as the *Types of Social Structure in Eastern Indonesia*. Van Wouden observed the institutionalised dichotomy “between insiders and outsiders, original inhabitants and foreign invaders (or kings), land and sea” (see also Hägerdal 2012; Henley 2003; Lewis 2010). Across eastern Indonesia, myths commonly signal the historical displacement of autochthonous rulers by foreign ones, and Traube substantiates this well-known proposition by referring to the works of James Fox (on the Rotinese), Claudine Friedberg (on the Bunak), Henk Schulte Nordholt and van Wouden himself (on the Atoni and Belunese, respectively).

The Mambai represent a variation on a theme. What for the Mambai is not distinctive is the way ritual power is relegated to the Mambai and political power to foreigners (*malai* or *malaia*), particularly white foreigners (*malai butin*) and, specifically, Portuguese. In this, *Cosmology* does not make too many concessions to “real history”, but here the author permits one, noting that the “actual presence [of Portuguese colonial rulers] dates back to the mid-17th century ... and sustained contact with Mambai leaders at least since the founding of Dili in 1769” (Traube 1986: 52). The element unique to the Mambai’s mythologised representation, however, is that which positions *malaia* not as outsiders as such, but as the younger of two Mambai brothers who heads overseas and returns to Timor to assume political power (p. 53). This ancestral relatedness is expressed in ritual poetry, as Traube demonstrates, with the Mambai or Timorese identified by black and the foreigner by white:

White and black
 Timorese and Portuguese ...
 They have one mother
 They have one father
 [Who] gave birth to white and black
 Gave birth to the Malaia and the Timorese.

The origins of colonial rule—“The Walk of Rule”—was “entrusted to [her] with noticeably less reluctance than was shown by narrators of the [origin myth]”. Traube says that she “received it, in part or in whole, from a number of people in different ritual centers” and she presents us with “one version”. Traube does not specify, at first, whose version this was, but she does note the significance of the historic moment.

Certain Mambai elected to reveal these origins to me at a time when there was considerable concern and anxiety over the prospect of decolonization—or, as one old man put it to me, over “this matter of our younger brothers going away”. At that point, during the summer of 1974, many Mambai seemed to regard the idea of decolonization as a violation of proper order. Yet even over the few remaining months before my own departure, they had begun to accept the idea, and they were starting to look forward toward a political future that remained uncertain.

At this particular juncture in Traube’s fieldwork, serious civil conflict was looming, so, far from “myth” being a static story, it is understandable that the “anxieties as well as the hopes that they voiced to [her] in this period shaped and were shaped by a mythic model of the colonial situation” (p. 54). On no account, it seems, will Traube grant us a pure myth untranslated by context: if not the intimate politics of being a *menina* between two jealousy-racked ritual masters, it is the politics of decolonisation.

The “Walk of Rule” is an offshoot of the origin myth, “The Walk of the Earth”. Father Heaven’s sons are given distinct characteristics: the older one, Ki Sa, is black because he has bathed in black water, and his younger sibling, Loer Sa, is white because he has bathed in clean water. By way of Father Heaven’s distribution of patrimony, he bestows the sacred rock and tree upon the black Ki Sa, and book and pen upon the white Loer Sa. Father Heaven also puts a number of “power signs” inside the origin (sacred) house, signs which are the “rule and ban” (*ukun nor badun*). Loer Sa makes off with these signs (whatever they are) and escapes overseas to Portugal; thereafter these signs are referred to as the “ban of the sea” (p. 55).

The elder black brother, Ki Sa, now resides alone in Timor, but he wields no power over the people for they do not “fear and tremble” at the rock and tree under his command. The “realm”, as Traube translates an unidentified term, turns to chaos, and so black Ki Sa decides he must go to Portugal to find his younger brother. He crosses the sea to Portugal, and when he locates him, he explains his predicament and requests Loer Sa provide him with “some new token of status” that will make his own people “tremble and fear” before him. Loer Sa obliges with a flag pole (among other tokens), but retains the flag (*bandeira ni rin*), saying that his descendants will come bearing it at a later date. Ki Sa returns to Timor to display the token, everybody “fears and trembles” and his authority is reinstated; people come to pay their respects to rock and tree. Generations later,

Loer Sa's descendants arrive in a ship, the flag flying from the mast. A gathering of people receives the newcomers at the beach as their younger brothers. Ki Sa receives flags and other tokens, but gives them up, thereby symbolically surrendering rule (*sra ukun*) to "the new indigenous executives" that come from outside the realm. By this act,

the original rulers renounce all worldly responsibilities toward the realm they founded, but they retain their ritual authority over the cosmos. The poetic expression for their renunciation of power is that they "sit down to look after the rock and to watch over the tree" ... From this distinction Mambai fashion a suggestive metaphor for complementary governance: "Ours", they say, "is the base of rule, and the *Malaia* hold the tip of rule" (p. 56).

Worthy of mention is an additional detail on myth-context. As in the origin myth, Traube sought perspectives on The Walk of Rule beyond Raimaus and Hohul. In some "other village", she discovered that *malaia* were equally important mythical figures, but less could be told about Loer Sa's initial departure than about his descendants' eventual return. In a similar vein, Traube noticed a discrepancy regarding the "material traces" of myth. She had learned that the three central pillars in the sacred houses of Hohul and Raimaus were identified with three ancestors, two of whom were Ki Sa and Loer Sa. Loer Sa was invariably the northernmost pillar, and not coincidentally, it "look[ed] toward the sea" and supported the veranda, which was the interface between insiders and outsiders, since visitors were received there (p. 59). In the same "other village", Traube was confronted by sacred houses with three identical central pillars, so she asked the elders after the identity of those pillars. In response, the elders named the first two (including Ki Sa) but could not comment on the third. Mau Balen and Mau Bere, however, would not let the matter pass, and the elders went off to confer privately on the third pillar before venturing an answer to their pushy guests.

Mau Balen, Mau Bere and I spent the rest of the afternoon alone together. The two of them were excited and talkative, commenting frequently, and in patronizing tones, on the ignorance of these elders. We dined, still talking about the incident. After dinner we received a visit from the elders. One of them came forward as spokesman and made a short simple speech. The third pillar, he said, was "that youngest fellow, Loer Sa the *Malaia*", but they

themselves knew only his name. If I wished to know more about his origins, the man concluded, glancing at Mau Balen and Mau Bere, I should "ask in Hohul and Raimaus" (pp. 59–60).

Traube trails off into an explication of the concentrated nature of mythical knowledge, but what lies in a footnote is intriguing:

Mau Balen and Mau Bere were explicitly regarded by others as representatives of Hohul and Raimaus. Their status was not without its effects on speech situations. On a number of occasions it seemed to me that our hosts felt that they were being evaluated by the "masters of Hohul and Raimaus". If so, they were not far wrong (p. 253n7).

We can take that as further evidence of the concentrated nature of mythical knowledge. But it also gives insight into the nature of the encounter: through allying herself with Mau Balen and Mau Bere, and going elsewhere, Traube was, perhaps more knowingly than inadvertently, playing off ritual expertise in much the same way as she was playing off Mau Balen and Mau Bere themselves. To understand *Cosmology* is, one might say, to appreciate the particular strategies by which Traube enrolled two male informants of high status, took them travelling with her, and extracted myth from the contest between them.

In a mythological sense, Traube herself might have been viewed as one of the white descendants of Loer Sa's pillar that she was enquiring about. Earlier in the chapter, I cast doubt on Traube's interpretation that the Mambai perceived her symbolically as the returning younger brother, or sister, a descendent of Loer Sa. I did so to highlight a tendency among anthropologists to opt for culturalist interpretations at the expense of everyday interests: from economic benefits to mundane curiosities, affections, erotics, aversions and fixations. Field anthropologists, evidently, mean many things to the people they study.

However, nor should Traube's culturalism be summarily dismissed (not least by me knowing very little about the Mambai). In the eyes of the Timorese, she was a colonial, and there was little to distinguish her from the Portuguese, since she was white, she came from "over the sea" and was of "book and pen". The identity the Timorese attributed to Traube becomes clear when she describes how one day Mau Balen and Mau Bere were condemning the Portuguese for their historical abolition of the tribute tax. In doing so, Mau Balen

remarked to Traube, "It was *you* who ruined things", thus implicating the ethnographer herself in the specific category of the colonials (or younger brothers) as well as the general category of *malaia* (p. 62) [emphasis added].⁵ This stands as only one of few examples, and so, in this singularly Timorese "structure of the conjuncture" (Sahlins 1985) between myth, encounter and ethnographic presentation, Traube perhaps did not quite have the evidence required to make the point more forcefully.

Nearly two years after her first arrival, Traube left Timor. By the time *Cosmology and Social Life* was published in 1986, East Timor had been integrated into Indonesia for a decade, with all its hideous consequences (Traube 1986: xx). Another 15 years would pass before Traube would return to East Timor. Surrounded by the destruction left by the militia groups, she would take stock of all that had happened in the interim years and see what would happen next. Of her two friends, only Mau Balen had survived. So, with Mau Balen and, this time, Mau Bere's kin as informants, she would resume her investigation. She would examine the liberation struggle, nationalism and the toll of human suffering against the inequitable post-independence rewards; and she would realise the significance of "a narrative tradition about a late 19th-century missionary encounter" that she had previously dismissed as "folklore". Reading between the lines of her "Unpaid Wages" (2007), I cannot escape the impression that Traube's follow-up research has really been about Mau Bere, who died without recompense, like the semi-mythical, Christ-like "folkloric" figure of Tat Felis, who the Mambai invoke to make sense of injustice. As such, one may detect in Elizabeth Traube's research a quietly devastated *menina* reaching out to the loving memory of Mau Bere and, perhaps, extending to him the missing words as a final, regretful parting gift.⁶

Conclusion

The preceding ten ethnographies, covered over as many chapters, intersect different stages in the late colonial period of Portuguese Timor. The 19th-century ethnographies of Afonso de Castro and Henry Forbes (Chapters One and Two) were set in the context of weak colonial power. Colonial authority, concentrated in Dili, signified a relatively modest threat to the autonomy and livelihoods of hinterland kingdoms. From the Portuguese perspective, the apparently childish mix of indigenous superstition, fetish and ritual contradicted “true religion” and “true knowledge”, and stood in the way of saving souls, civilising and developing. To exert a level of influence over the restless kingdoms, the Portuguese fluctuated between military incursions and a tactful accommodation of “customs”.

The tide quickly turned with the pacification campaigns of Governor Celestino da Silva (1894–1908). His mobilisation of allied Timorese forces to fight rebel kingdoms using, in part, ritual warfare and headhunting, is illustrative of how colonials appropriated indigenous ways as a military strategy (Roque 2010a). With pacification came the securing of indigenous loyalties, the closer administration of the kingdoms, the establishment of large coffee estates, the institution of compulsory labour, the imposition of new taxes and, not coincidentally, the growth of ethnography (Kammen 2015: 96–9). The reach of ethnographic knowledge kept pace with the degree of colonial penetration. The magistrate Alberto Osório de Castro embodied the early 20th-century colonial commitment to ethnography as an instrument of rule (Chapter Three). Over successive decades, a mix of techniques—some based on mimesis of indigenous juridical authority and others on the sheer imposition of Portuguese forms—would see the modification of indigenous polities and animistic practices to suit colonial objectives, including economic development, the reconstitution of native political structures and Christianisation

(Kammen 2015; Roque 2012a). These interventions posed an acute threat to indigenous autonomy, ways of life and animism; but they also provided real material and social opportunities, particularly for chiefs who demonstrated their loyalty to the Portuguese.

Military commanders and administrators such as José Martinho, Júlio Lencastre and Armando Pinto Correia (Chapters Four and Five) were deeply involved in these changes. These men were particularly concerned with plantation development and clearing sacred land for cash crops. But other animistic “anachronisms” also bore on their vocation. They would act to eradicate sorcery, force timely burials and minimise animism’s inefficiencies in the form of protracted rituals and extravagant animal sacrifices. They would tax polygamy and impose licences on certain rites. They would stamp out the activities of “charlatans”, “luminaries” or “Black Governors” who sought illegitimate power. They would manage the circulation of sacred artefacts as they were wrested from their customary functions. They would also plan a future free of the “architecture of animism”; ancestral villages forever harassed by fictitious spirits would be replaced by settlements free of them; decent housing would encourage hard work, sensible recreation, proper education, civilised sexuality and obeisance to Catholic precepts. Ethnography served and reflected these ideals. Yet, given rapid “Portugalisation”, it also paradoxically reflected a desire to articulate a Timorese cultural purity. This only accentuated the multifaceted colonial engagement with the Timorese, just as animism continued to confront new challenges, including the growing local ambivalence about the power of *lulik* (Bovensiepen and Rosa 2016).

The Catholic missions were implicated in the administrative, economic and social objectives described above, albeit from their unique perspective which stressed Christian conversion and moral enlightenment. As we saw through the ethnography of Father Abílio José Fernandes (Chapter Six), Catholics posed a patent threat to animism. They preached against the ills of idolatry, demonised pagan priests (or sorcerers), took and burned the sacra, vitiated rituals, annulled pagan marriages and forbade what they called superstitions; Catholic ethnography’s construction of an ahistorical, godless, indigenous pagan essence expedited these interventions. At the same time, the expansion of missions, churches, parishes and schools offered benefits to the native people: education for children, alliance with the state, employment within colonial structures, participation in Catholic ceremony and even protection from ancestor spirits.

In the post-war period, non-Portuguese professional anthropologists went in pursuit of Timorese cultural essences. They had to travel further and look harder to locate a Timorese purity now vested in clearly demarcated ethnolinguistic groups. Ethnographers such as Margaret King (Chapter Seven), David Hicks (Chapter Eight), Shepard Forman (Chapter Nine) and Elizabeth Traube (Chapter Ten) also posed a threat to animism in the course of field practice. They ran the risk of transgressing animistic conventions or taboos, particularly when these hindered their access to information. They necessarily adjusted their field methods to suit animistic practices, social hierarchies, aspirations of local people and even the proclivities of spirits. In doing so, they were liable to shape the expression of that which they were studying, negatively through their breaching of taboo, and positively through their endorsement of animist cultural forms.

All of these complexities present a picture too varied to press into a single theory. Yet, patterns in transformative animism can be discerned from among the myriad historical encounters between foreigners and animists. In order to weave together lessons from the ten stories presented in the preceding chapters, I advance two arguments: the interactive argument and the homology argument. I then discuss the textualisation of animism as an ethnographic enterprise problematically strung between field experience and the social milieu of professional anthropology. Finally I offer some reflections about what the vertical, meta-ethnographic study of animism might contribute to the history of anthropology and new animism.

The Interactive Argument: Hyper-, Defensive and Assisted Animism

When Judith Bovensiepen (2014a: 135) suggests that “*lulik* powers appear to be more dangerous precisely in those historical and social circumstances when foreign powers are most threatening”, it would appear she is close to what I call hyper-animism: an intense Timorese reactivity to the colonial threat to the animistic ontology, particularly the accentuated fear of *lulik* potencies when foreigners brought the dead into the proximity of the living by breaking taboos. Hyper-animism can be seen in Forbes’ collection of botanical specimens on *lulik* land by which anxious locals pursued him up the sacred mountain, imploring him to come back down. Colonial ethnographers Martinho and Correia reported on the “fury of sacrifices” instigated

when outsiders violated *lulik* prescriptions. Such furies occurred particularly following the execution of colonial orders, for example, to chop down sacred forests, snip back sacred trees, gauge out sacred springs, propagate taboo crops, blow up sacred rocks, murder totemic animals. Whatever the reason—for plantations, roads, museums or fun—people engaged in such intense hyper-animistic sacrificial episodes precisely to appease the spirits in recognition or anticipation of adverse consequences: sickness, death, failed harvests, and so on (see Hicks 1976).

Post-war professional ethnographers similarly reported cases of hyper-animism. King (1963a) documented the hyper-animistic role of ritual priests during the Japanese occupation when they called on *lulik* powers to make Timorese invisible (see also Schulte Nordholt 1971: 335–6). Hicks (1976) describes the hyper-animism in a hamlet of Viqueque arising in the wake of the people's missionary-inspired neglect of the ritual propitiation of dead ancestors. Relentless hauntings occasioned a vain return to feverish ritual sacrifice to the offended ghosts by pagans and Christians alike; eventually, the people abandoned their houses and settled elsewhere. Professional field ethnographers could even provoke hyper-animism. Forman's Makassae invented a ritual specifically to accommodate their breaking of taboo for the sake of advancing his research. Later, his fateful choice of a stone on which to sit—the sacred stone of the first Makassae ancestor—set off a chain reaction of animist events, resulting in the fire that reduced some of Forman's field site to ashes.

Defensive animism served to protect animistic integrity against threat by containing the risks posed by foreigners. After Forbes' indecorous encroachment onto sacred land to enhance his plant collection, the locals' defence of animism saw them remove *lulik* objects from where he camped lest he resume his mischief. Defensive animism came to pass after Anna Forbes' caretaker ceased to attend to the needs of malarial Anna in order to avoid the charge of sorcery. Defensive animism could equally manifest when the Timorese refused to follow orders, such as to bury a body within an administrative boundary, as decreed by the authorities, and not on ancestral lands, as decreed by animism. Timorese targeted for religious conversion defensively refused the demands of Catholic priests and nuns to surrender the *sacra*. It was not unheard of that sacred weapons, wielded by the spirits themselves, could rise up and attack priests attempting to take these weapons; the story itself, which issued a stern warning to priests, also mobilised the defences of animism.

After Forman's faux pas resulted in incendiary devastation, the local Makassae people became more reticent towards him to prevent further trouble from this problematic American. As a "wanderer without kin", Hicks jeopardised the smooth running of a burial procession when his wandering hand threatened to allow a soul of the dead to re-enter the corpse; Hicks required restraint and had to be put somewhere safe. Decades later, the same Hicks would learn that local people had kept from him knowledge of the existence of sacred houses in 1966 and 1967; understandably so, since that was a time when overzealous missionaries threatened animist practices. Traube's research subjects also perceived her to be a risky, wandering outsider. They prevented her wandering eyes from beholding the *lulik* statue of the Virgin Mary, which was stashed in a chest inside one sacred house; they securely tucked away the same statue in another house when some foreigners were said to be visiting (Traube 1986: 263n5).

Defensive animism, then, policed boundaries to prevent transgressions and impede the potentially dire consequences emanating from the spirit world. This hyper-vigilant mode of animism could also arise to safeguard foreigners against spiritual threats, such as when Hicks was led away from the funeral cortège. Forman's primary informant, Nanai'e Nau Naha, employed the old ritual trick of simply not naming certain names—or declining to "lay charges"—to insulate Forman from indictment (and likely punishment) for having kindled the village fire, not deliberately with a match but unintentionally through the tabooed killing of a messenger snake. That this transformative animism should happen in the context of a growing Timorese ambivalence about *lulik* powers points to the recursive nature of hyper- and defensive animism. Timorese were not simply afraid of outsider transgressions of *lulik*; they also feared the repercussions of their own negligence of spirit matters. Colonial or ethnographising others, too, not only posed a transgressive danger to *lulik*; they could themselves become unwitting victims of their own transgressions.

Another facet of transformative animism is what I call assisted animism. Instances appear in the ethnographic literature of colonial officials lending their support to animism in various ways: protecting indigenous sacred patrimony, intervening to curtail the commercialisation of *lulik* objects, returning stolen *lulik* booty or consoling those afflicted or endangered by the loss of their *lulik* artefacts. The mere ethnographic interest in sacred houses and ritual phenomena equated to an assistance to animism by confirming their importance and by

appearing to validate the power of *lulik*. King, Hicks, Forman and Traube all found their informants recruiting them to document or record rituals and myths for the benefit of the Timorese in a context of increasing acculturation, uncertainty about *lulik* power or worry that the younger generation would forget traditions; the Makassae elders' arrangement to have Forman compile a book about Makassae traditions is exemplary. Critical to assisted animism was field anthropologists' respectful, supportive and mimetic approach to the phenomena they studied; the very approach that best elicited data also happened to be best suited to strengthening an increasingly disenfranchised animism. Assistance, of course, was subject to trade-offs: locals assisted ethnographers in the provision of research opportunities, going so far as to break taboos just as, in other situations, they rigorously upheld those same taboos. In sum, hyper-, defensive and assisted animism index three interactive sub-categories of transformative animism.

The Homology Argument: Ceremony, Ritual and Political Animism

To propose, as Bovensiepen does (2014a: 35), a *structural similarity* in the role of foreign powers and *lulik* powers, given that both parties represent threat and opportunity, raises two questions: one question concerns the precise nature of the structural relationship of spirit outsiders and human outsiders; the other question concerns history, since the nature and intensity of threat and opportunity were surely not constant across time. To address structure and history at once, one may ask whether "structural similarity" might be taken to mean more than an analogous representational similarity identified by an outside analyst (that is, me). Could it be that by Timorese perception, reason and ontology, foreigners and spirits evolved to become homologous powers? And if so, did a transfer of power from spirits to colonial others take place as colonial others progressively assumed the role of executive power over the course of colonial history?

To explain, analogy and homology are biological metaphors that have been absorbed into the social sciences. Analogy refers to an incidental kind of relationship between two things, without a common history able to establish an intrinsic connection. Homology, in contrast, denotes a deep structural connection with historical antecedents. To build on Bovensiepen's general suggestion of "a relationship", I propose that a relational homology between foreigners and spirits

became particularly marked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as colonial dominance increased and as both the threats and opportunities posed by foreigners increased proportionately. The coterminous ambivalence about the potency of spirits and *lulik* simultaneously gave rise to an uncertainty about which power—spirits or foreigners—was responsible for given adversities: it could be either; it could be both. Homology, of course, always figured as an inherently animistic potential given animism's ontological capacity for categorical slippage; that is, for one type of thing or being to assume the form of another based on a conceptual-empirical fluidity across categories, for example, human and spirit, animate and inanimate and, one must now add, foreigner and spirit (Morrison 2015: 38–9; Schulte Nordholt 1971: 426). I will illustrate the relational homology between foreigners and spirits in view of the convergence of ceremony and ritual, another facet of a transformative animism, which I call political animism. Although these twin terms—ceremony and ritual—are frequently deployed as synonyms, I keep them analytically separate for reasons that soon become apparent.

Ricardo Roque (2011, 2012a) has discussed the importance of ceremony and etiquette to colonial governance, particularly from the 1860s onwards. He shows that these were crucial to vassalage that covered proclamations of loyalty, the attribution of Portuguese military title to native chiefs, the presentation of tokens of authority (such as staves), the collection of tax and the provision of tribute labour. Ceremony also marked the visits of Portuguese officials to the kingdoms. The ethnographies of Osório de Castro (2004 [1910]) and King (1963a) are replete with accounts of welcoming receptions in their honour. In the presence of a governor, all the more grandiosity, expense and pomp accompanied the performances (Cinatti 1965: 38–9). Ceremony established the modes, etiquette and décor of relationships between Timorese and high-status foreigners.

Notions of ceremony, Roque (2012a: 82) notes, “have been at the core of anthropological understandings of indigenous state power in Southeast Asia”. Similarly, he continues, “ritual connections with ancestors have also been conventionally described as one definitional trait of indigenous or traditional societies, particularly in Timor”. Anthropologically, however, ceremonies have been treated as events distinct from ritual (despite the mixing of the terms “ceremony” and “ritual”). In the case of Timor, ceremony concerned the relationship between Timorese and the state, while ritual concerned that between Timorese and spirits. This distinction, in fact, amounts to a rephrasing

of the division between “political authority” and “spiritual authority”. Some social scientists have become highly conscious of this division and organised their ethnography around it (Traube 1986), while others have questioned the intransigence of the sacred/profane binary underpinning so-called “diarchic rule”, at least historically (Hägerdal 2012: 56; Schulte Nordholt 1971: 426).

Colonial ethnographers judged ceremony according to its aesthetic or pragmatic value while judging ritual according to its epistemological value (generally they saw it as being based on false reasoning). Most professional ethnographers (excluding King) did not consider ceremony to be uniquely “Timorese” and therefore overlooked it in favour of authentic “traditional” practices—hence the parallel tendency of post-war professional field anthropologists to distance themselves from “political authority” and Christianity as topics of investigation. Underpinning the skewed distribution of ethnographic attention accorded to ceremony and ritual respectively was (and remains) a taken-for-granted Cartesian, dualist rationale premised on a division between the “empirical” and the “supernatural”: ceremony attended to the tangible relationships between Timorese and powerful human outsiders; ritual was concerned with the intangible or “supernatural” nexus between Timorese and powerful spirit outsiders. Post-war professional ethnographers were predominantly interested in the latter.

More than any historian of Timor, Roque (2010a, 2011, 2012a) has reached across the divide between ceremony—as the colonial encounter with animism—and ritual—as the indigenous encounter with ancestors. He has done so in the context of his discussion of “mimicry” by which colonials approximated indigenous customs (Pt.: *usos e costumes*) as a strategy in the execution of governance. Combining Roque’s ideas of ceremony and mimicry with Bovensiepen’s (2014a: 35) idea of a “structural similarity”, I draw on the evidence to demonstrate that in Timorese hierarchical animistic ontology a strategic and highly pragmatic rapprochement took place between ceremony (with human outsiders) and ritual (with spirit outsiders): this is what I call political animism. Mimetic governance favoured this rapprochement because the adaptation of ceremonial behaviour and etiquette to harmonise with the animistic way of being—both ontologically (in light of spirits) and sociologically (in light of ceremonial praxis)—effectively enabled the projection of animism onto ceremonial events.

Now, expanding on Bovensiepen's "causal mechanism" (that is, threat and advantage), I propose that the socio-ontological transposition of ritual practice to ceremonial practice depended on the changing configuration, source and intensity of threat and advantage, which propelled a transfer of power from spirit to foreign potencies particularly in situations when Timorese perceived that the threat posed by outsiders was paramount. In those situations, human outsiders gradually came to occupy the space of executive power while spirits and ritual specialists fell in line accordingly. This shift in the balance of power was heightened by rising ambivalence about spirit potencies, an increasing mobility in the circulation and meaning of *lulik* objects as well as a slippage in relationship modalities between Timorese and spirits on the one hand, and Timorese and foreigners on the other. As a result, what and who were *lulik*—revered and special—in (and beyond) ritual context acquired a homologous significance in (and beyond) ceremonial context.

The transfer is exemplified in the episode surrounding the turning of the sacred forest of Mundo Perdido over to coffee in 1916. This came at a time immediately following the War of Manufahi (1911–12) when the Portuguese were now the undisputed overlords. From this point on, the alliance between loyal secular chiefs and the colonial administration would only strengthen. On said occasion, Governor Filomeno da Câmara, the Timorese and spirits entered into trilateral negotiations—at once ritual and ceremonial—to have the *lulik* forests of Mundo Perdido cleared to plant coffee. In Lencastre's (1931a: 19–21) account, this conversion represented a significant departure from the violent colonial transgression of *lulik* boundaries that incited hyper-animism's sacrificial furies. Nor was there any hint of defensive animism to ward off harm by creating distance between *lulik*-threatening foreign potencies and animistic phenomena. Nor does this conversion seem to be a kind of assisted animism, for the intention was not to lend support to animistic incertitude or regulate the misappropriation of *lulik*. Rather, it was a confluence of ceremony and ritual that I call political animism. Ritually, *powerful* spirits were made to cede to the planned plantation development; ritual chiefs were made to cede to the political authority of secular chiefs; and secular chiefs entered into an alliance with *powerful* outsiders in the form of Governor Câmara and other colonial officials. Ceremonially, Dom Francisco of Ossú (one of the wealthiest Liurai) was surrounded by his retinue of important chiefs, priests and elders and accompanied

by dancers, when he offered the governor—"His Excellency, their Lord and Master"—their most prized *lulik* possession, the flintlock rifle. In the same instance, he declared the people's commitment to peace and hard work *for colonial objectives*. Lencastre observed that through such a "breaking of the *lulik*" no "greater homage" could be paid to "the authorities that ruled them".

The timing is important. The sacred forest of Mundo Perdido became subject to plantation development at a point in history when "pacification" was complete and the risk of displeasing the Portuguese by resisting the "agricultural revolution" was now greater than the risk of displeasing the spirits; spirits were now ritually—and politically—called upon to adjust to the prepotent Portuguese. If "no greater homage" than the sacred rifle could be paid to a governor, we could equally invoke the homology by saying that no greater sacrifice, gift, offering or invocation could have been made. The flintlock rifle, moreover, was not just a sacred *object*. It was a *vital force*, traditionally deployed in ritual to summon spirits (Trindade 2012). (Forbes [1989: 443] had learned that such guns were "more powerful than any other gun, however new".) Now, the same vital force was propitiating colonials as ritual slid into ceremony and as the role of colonials and spirits became structurally identified—homologously and hierarchically. Of course, risk was also being weighed against the rewards—the rewards of coffee, land and riches of which triumphal secular chiefs had now become supremely conscious and whose material excesses successive ethnographers would observe (King 1963a). Animism had assumed a new mode of political rationality that accommodated competing powers in a novel, historically specific way.

The Mundo Perdido case is illustrative of a broader shift in the post-pacification balance of power between spirits and Portuguese, between secular chiefs and ritual chiefs, between ritual chiefs and spirits, and between secular chiefs and Portuguese. This realignment of power can also be extended to Catholicism. In Chapter Six, we saw how the ritual delivery of sacra to priests and nuns was incorporated into Christian ritual. In several instances that occurred around the mid 1930s, the Timorese gave up the sacra during the Catholic observance of the triduum (see Pascoal 1936b); the sacra, I believe, constituted a ritual offering to the clergy. Earlier, in 1908, when Father Sebastião Aparício da Silva of the Central Soibada Mission ventured to nearby mountains to burn sacra and sacred houses, his arrival involved a ritual feast. I have also proposed that when the same priest extricated the devil from those "satanic" sites, he was, in

the Timorese view, actually appeasing a malevolent spirit. Far from this constituting an attack on animism, Silva was welcomed in, not simply to lend his assistance as an outsider, but to intervene as an animistic insider. As in the case of *Mundo Perdido*, this incident necessitated a transfer of the authority customarily reserved for “pagan priests” to a “Catholic priest”. It is revealing that the Timorese projected the same title that they customarily reserved for their own ritual masters (*nai lulik* and other versions) onto Catholic priests (Andrade 2012: 29; Cinatti 1987: 184). In his *Timor*, ex-governor Teófilo Duarte (1930: 367) intuited precisely this collapsing of the boundaries between the two types of priests—“sorcerers” in his account. Through this conflation, priests attained a level of mystical, animistic equivalence with, or even ascendancy over, their pagan counterparts. Without denying the fact that missionaries were intent on destroying animism, they were simultaneously and unwittingly pulled into its onto-logic; for priests, animism and Christianity were diametrically opposed while animists could hardly keep them apart (Rosa 2012).

The ritual and ceremonial confluence inhering in political animism would later be conveyed in *Eden to Paradise* (1963a) where King describes her attendance, alongside a governor, at the Be Malai fishing rites in August of 1960. As in *Mundo Perdido*, this account does not simply point to a kind of performance animism whereby foreigners became the mere spectators of another culture. Instead, the now well-established deep homologous roles played between eminent outsiders and spirits were interactive and mutually constituted in a way that recalls Roque’s (2010a) idea of mutual parasitism. Ritual priests summoned both outsiders and spirits to Be Malai, at once ceremonially and ritually, and I suspect that it was not coincidental that local people deemed King to be *lulik* on that day; both the governor and his *lulik* companion will certainly have received *lulik* gifts during the ceremony.

The idea of an emergent political animism binding ceremony and ritual finds further support in the ethno-historical writings of Roque. On “conjunctive occasions” when governors would arrive in the kingdoms, he writes:

[T]he visits of the colonial governor to the kingdoms were special ceremonial moments of collective tribute and deference. They gave the impression of an important stately occasion. In fact, to the extent that they configured an intense public *invocation* of

the core elements of politico-jural power, the governors' visits appeared as *state rituals: special ceremonial occasions in which the charismatic or sacred qualities* perceived as constitutive of the jural power of colonial governors were publically performed, celebrated and put at stake ... People from various settlements, sometimes different kingdoms, would come together to receive the governor. There were customary feasting, songs, drum-playing (*batuque*), dances (*tabedai*). The men were arrayed in war dresses and held their swords in the air, whilst dancing. *Liurais* would bring presents or even offer buffalos for sacrifice to the governor and his party ... (Roque 2012a: 78) [emphasis added].

Roque's descriptions certainly evoke ritual-ceremonial or political animism at the empirical level (for example, the buffalos *sacrificed* for the governor). In his deliberate fusion of terminology—the portrayal of ceremonies as *state rituals* and governors as having *charismatic* and *sacred* qualities—Roque suggests more than an *analogous* connection between ritual and ceremony; he implies a *homologous* one.

Roque emphasises the special role attributed to governors in the Timorese ontology. Only at the sight of the governor would “one of the most important ... emblems, the Portuguese flag ... [be] publically shown and specially raised ...”. (One will recall from preceding chapters that ritual priests showed the sacra to the magistrate Osório de Castro when in the presence of the governor; similarly, they showed them to King in the presence of an administrator.) Colonials, Roque adds, understood the *sacred quality* of governors as a “technique of rule” in its own right. One late 19th-century governor, he reports, returned from the kingdoms of the view that the “presence of the governor always represents for them a magic influence” (Roque 2012a: 77–9). Another example can be found in the pacification-era military leader, Alferes Francisco Duarte, whom locals revered, in accord with his nickname “Arbiru”, as a mysterious, invincible, supernatural being (Felgas 1956: 271n114). Fernandes (Chapter Six) offered several more examples of the power and prestige that missionaries commanded behind enemy lines or amidst mutinous crowds (see also Roque 2012a: 81). Notwithstanding one notorious counter-example (see Kammen 2015: 69–77), local people could not bring themselves to harm governors or distinguished figures in the colonial regime any more than they could harm distinguished ancestor spirits, such as the crocodile Avô Lai Liba, whom the people of Seical, the reader will recall from the introduction, delivered *live* to “His Excellency” the Administrator of Baucau, Armando Pinto

Correia. Correia, of course, wielded exactly that kind of homologous spiritual power before his Timorese subjects. Such events should not be construed simply as *political* subordination to foreigners. They were rather political animistic expressions founded on a spiritual reverence by which hierarchical animism was projected onto hierarchical colonialism to become, one could say, transformative hierarchical animism.

Roque's (2011: 6) concept of mimetic governance—a colonial strategy to incorporate or replicate the laws, ceremony, etiquette and behaviours of the indigenous people to increase Portuguese power—fits hand-in-glove with my notion of a homology-driven transformative animism. Because imitative governance reached in to animism, it created the ideal conditions for animism to reach out to colonials; at this meeting point, each wrapped its logic around the other in a mutually parasitic manner (Roque 2010a). If the interpretation of homology stands—and indeed more evidence arises in the scholarship on the Indonesian and postcolonial periods¹—it extends to scripted routines, protocols of engagement, ascribed identities and social roles. Timorese accorded locations of eminence and privilege to outsiders in ceremony just as they had long done to spirits in ritual. They propitiated outsiders in ceremonial contexts just as they had long done to spirits in ritual ones. If spirits presented—not *represented*—danger outside the managerial control of ritual context, outsiders likewise presented—not *represented*—danger outside of ceremonial context.

In this, too, we may understand the accentuated hazards personified in post-war anthropologists. Hicks and Traube's research subjects viewed them as wanderers precisely because they "wandered" outside of established Portuguese ceremonial practice; they were also without the kin that would otherwise identify them. Lacking categorical fixity, they were prone to animistic slippage—from benevolent power to dangerous one or, possibly, from man to ghost (as we saw in the case of Hicks); the quasi-*lulik* status of the ritually and ceremonially incorporated King can be seen in converse terms. There was, therefore, a need to secure a safe animistic place for these wanderers; animism rose to the occasion. If it could not incorporate them by "opening the door" (assisted animism), it would shut them out (defensive animism).

Incorporation assumed yet another face in the form of Timorese oral history. Traube found a reflection of her outsider self in the Mambai myth, the Walk of the Rule, whereby foreigners were younger brothers who had once left Timor for overseas and then returned again to seize political authority, leaving the Timorese as guardians

of spiritual authority. Traube was actually incarnated in the mythical animism she extracted, took home and textualised. Her very object of investigation (the myth) enveloped her own presence in Timor in a way that recalls Marshall Sahlins' (1985) idea of the structure of the conjuncture.² The important thing to note, however, is that Traube was kin as well as a colonial outsider; dead ancestors, too, were kin as well as spirit outsiders. In fact, during her fieldwork, some people would occasionally refer to a notion—which they themselves would laughingly disavow—that “her people” (that is, foreigners) were their own (that is, Timorese) ancestors reincarnated; Traube surmised that in “Mambai cosmology, the land of the dead lies overseas, as does Portugal”, which provided the grounds for “a broad set of Timorese associations between Europeans and the dead”.³ The distance and proximity of both types of exceedingly powerful and dangerous outsider-kin, namely spirits and foreigners, attracted corresponding, animistic modes of engagement and management: the tension between two kinds of high-profile kin—one a brother (possibly a returned sister), the other a dead ancestor—was what the people of Seical were up against when His Excellency, Administrator Correia, ordered them to kill their crocodile totem, Avô Lai Liba. To deliver the crocodile live to Baucau on a stretcher was to appease Administrator Correia—perhaps a sort of totem figure in his own right—with a sacrifice that was no less *lulik* than the flintlock rifle that Governor Filomeno da Câmara had received just over a decade earlier.

Ethnographic Locations

Colonial ethnographers concerned themselves with a wide range of interlocking ethno-historical, administrative, political and economic topics; history tended to be treated alongside ethnography; geography alongside race; colonial administration alongside native superstition; economic objectives alongside indigenous character. The synchronic and cultural-holistic perspective of the post-war non-Portuguese field ethnographers, in contrast, tended to remove them from colonial history and historiography. The latter group strategised to bypass certain types of places, informants and associations in order to approximate the cultural purity they would eventually document. This practice ran parallel to a fairly a-critical stance on their own location within the colonial apparatus and world system. If colonial ethnographers took for granted the way their ethnography was

interwoven with pacification, dominance, exploitation and civilising, non-Portuguese professional ethnographers skated over the same history and politics. In fact, they overlooked the very conditions through which their own profession of anthropology and their presence in Timor had arisen. When they acknowledged their place in colonial administration they did so barely more than pragmatically, noting the permissions they required, the personal empathies forged and the logistical support obtained. A more or less tacit understanding prevailed that anthropologists went to Timor to study "culture", not colonialism or politics. At the same time, the culture object led them to distance themselves from the colonial bureaucracy both in the execution of fieldwork and in text. The historical and even contemporary violence associated with Portuguese rule, for example, lay mainly outside the scope of their bounded ethnographic vision. To study indigenous religion was to avoid Christianity; to study spiritual authority was to avoid political authority; to study culture was to avoid the presence of colonials, the Chinese, the plantation system, the organisation of indigenous labour, the tax regime and colonial conflict; to study cosmology was to circumvent half of that which Timorese cosmology really entailed. (Of the ten professional anthropologists who conducted fieldwork in Portuguese Timor in the 1960s and 1970s, Hicks alone stands out for describing the field politics of acculturation.)

Yet, in another sense, the professional ethnography of the day was no less deeply "administrative" than was colonial ethnography. Ethnographers still needed to recognise local desires, secure informants, strike deals, offer incentives, make payments, forge friendships. Then they needed to manage these relationships through an "idiom of exchange". Haggadahs, photographs, wine and human affections all belonged to the ethnographic toolkit. The reciprocities and expectations shaped the hierarchical and racialised ethnographic encounters in which the Timorese were often vying to enhance their own status, material rewards and their disenfranchised animism by pandering to the appetites of outsiders and appropriating their resources. (Ritual priests pandered to the appetites of spirits to acquire specific benefits in a comparable way—Hicks 1976.) Within this dynamic, ethnographers had to manage their own bodies and feelings—countenances, longings, aversions, attractions and seductions—just as they sought to influence and control the bodies and souls of those they researched. None of this was without effect on the content of animism as it was both experienced and textualised. Relationships in

the field amounted to an interactive politics of exchange, much of which pivoted on the single-minded ethnographic yearning for data. Just as colonial ethnographers had been preoccupied with maximising the output of indigenous labour, non-Portuguese post-war ethnographers looked for ways to render the extraction of information as efficient as possible.

Racial and intellectual hierarchies could not help but infuse all of this, too. These appeared explicitly in the colonial ethnography as well as in King's *Eden to Paradise* (1963a). Colonial ethnography in general hid the racial politics of colonialism behind the moral mask of the "civilising mission". Professional ethnography generally hid behind the mask of science; the professionals, moreover, often believed the fiction that ethnography was a form of scientific enquiry. The scientific pose rigorously (naturalistically) upheld in some ethnographic publications, however, lapsed in others. King's populist and personal *Eden to Paradise* (1963a) exposed innumerable truths about her encounter with animism that her "scientific" publications (1963b, 1965) concealed. Science tended to delete the observer-self, the author, the ethnographer, which we see most clearly when we contrast Forman's peer-reviewed works (1980, 1981) with his non-reviewed articles (1976, 2001). Across his two editions of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* (1976, 2004), Hicks presents as two men in the one field; second-edition Hicks largely erased his first-edition self in the process of reinventing himself to match the anthropological norms that held sway 40 years after the fieldwork took place.

In the tradition of textual analysis ushered in by the publication of *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986), we discover how ethnography lies, invents, fabricates and *censors*. Ethnography feigns the transparent representation of "them" as mediated by a transparent (although often invisible) ethnographer-self. Yet the overriding—but predominantly hidden—contextual reality of ethnography is the academy; the greater "field" of which ethnographers are keenly conscious is the department, the university, the broader, hierarchical network of colleagues, institutions and publishers, all of which are enrolled to secure careers, status, funding, identity. This greater field relativises and transforms the "truth" of the field. The greater reality broaches the question of academic life that renders the "ethnography of them", in fact, more about us; ethnographic text is the foremost measure of standing and expertise; we, not they, are the audience. Accordingly, academic writing is subject to intense scientific and ethical scrutiny (Anderson 2008). Against the pressures of moral

conformism, the need to sustain ethnographic authority in text keeps field anthropologists fastened to a most careful, censored and manipulated presentation of both self and object of study.

The Reflexive Mask, Relativism and Meta-Ethnographic Transformative Animism

In Chapter Ten I praised Traube's *Cosmology and Social Life* (1986) for its open reflections on the gendering of field politics between herself and two male informants. Her reflexivity, however, cannot but have masked innumerable other truths that touch on transformative animism. Reflexivity itself is a mask that presents as revelation; it belongs to the art of the choreographing narrative that entices readers to believe in the transparency of experience. Field erotics have long figured as one of anthropology's most vexed ethical issues and they are rarely addressed directly (Fine 1993; Kulick and Wilson 1995). Traube's *Cosmology* (1986) presents two sexually transmitted myths; one was a protracted affair that took over a year to tell. Yet, in the course of subtly exhibiting the jealous rivalry of the two men, Traube foregoes discussion of her own sexuality. At the very moment she suspects *their* sexualised agendas, she emphasises her preoccupation with data ("the missing words"). We may also ask after the narrative function of her professed initial preference for "an old wise woman" as her primary informant over the two young men she eventually engaged, romantically, financially and mythologically. Did Traube's "old wise woman" serve as a cover for her own feelings, or reinforce the image of the in-principle chaste ethnographer? Rather than detail here what was "really felt" or "really happened" as Menina Traube and the two men "huddled in a crevice on a sacred mountain", it might be kept in mind that loneliness, desire, friendship, falling in love and making it constitute ordinary fieldwork experience. This level of experience typically belongs to the secret data set of experience, more or less. Ethnographic authority, professional integrity and career prospects rely on a series of guises, not least of which is the perception of chastity and controlled emotions—a precondition for scientific objectivity (Fine 1993).

Governor Castro's sensual hierarchy of dancing performance aesthetics, from Timorese women to Javanese and Indian, was clearly sexualised and racialised. How did Castro transform animism as he looked on, deprived and unstimulated, at the Timorese women dancers? We may wonder what Hicks' relationship with his key

informant and “firm friend”, the single Agostinha Soares, was like; in the patriarchal world of the eastern Tetum, being single, a firm friend and a ready informant were, surely, sociologically related. In light of Traube’s year-long origin myth extraction, we may ask how gender affected the content and fast-tracking of Hicks’ Tetum origin myth. What would the Mambai origin myth furnished by the “old wise woman” have looked like as a (presumably) non-erotic encounter? In subtle ways, animism was conditioned by the terms and relationships that undergirded its transmission.

Field site erotics and friendships, evidently, could expedite the very kind of “penetrative ethnography” that, in the 1960s and 1970s, had succumbed to a critical ethical revisionism as part of anthropology’s general “ethical turn”; the critique of ethnography as penetration in particular centred on the allegation that ethnography exploited relationships and violated cultural norms for the sake of obtaining data (see Davidson 2016; Robinson 2004). Eroticism aside, the critic may read Forman’s (1976) artful “reversal of agency” as a textual strategy to deflect attention from his own role in accessing tabooed information. A key moment comes when he reminds his teacher of the Makassae taboo—naming dead kin—when one would expect his teacher to be reminding *him* of the same taboo. Here, my meta-ethnographic intent is not to point to misrepresentation—mainly because there is no evidence for it—but to suggest that Forman’s mere ascription of agency in regards to the *who* of taboo-breaking presupposes anthropology’s ethical anxiety about penetrative ethnography. (From my perspective, that any ethical claim whatsoever should emerge at all in ethnographic writing is good reason to query it.)

Real discrepancies between ethnographic texts, in contrast, point explicitly to the concealment of content. In *Eden to Paradise* (1963a), the reader learns only in passing about King’s acquisition of a wide range of indigenous artefacts in Timor, and nothing about the intercultural politics of their acquisition. Among that range of objects was one solitary *lulik* mask. A different truth about the collection comes to light in a draft manuscript of *Eden to Paradise* and yet another truth in another publication (King 1963b). Perhaps this tells us something about ethnology’s growing discomfort concerning the long tradition of taking artefacts for museums, but also for oneself. Does that shift in mood also explain why King described her personal silver necklace as “lovely” but not *lulik*? (I am certain it was *lulik*;

King's daughter remembers the necklace but says she does not know whether it was *lulik* or not.⁴) Does the shift perhaps explain why the three professional field anthropologists examined in the final three chapters of this book did *not* take *sacra* to display in their living rooms at home in Britain or the United States? Or does it explain why in their published works they did *not admit* to doing so?

Even cultural relativism serves as mask. However salutary the relativist project has been for resisting racial and intellectual hierarchies, for seeking out emic (insider) perspectives over etic (outsider) ones, and for erasing classical asymmetries between primitives and moderns, experience contradicts this superimposed intercultural democracy. Here, I am not alluding to anthropology's "evil twin", applied anthropology, which by contentiously selling anthropology's expertise (mainly to the development industry) reasserts the same hierarchies that relativism aims to expunge (see Ferguson 1997). I am rather referring to the way relativism hides ethnographers' underlying personal epistemological certitudes, reasoning, sentiments, expressions and words when face to face with "animistic irrationality". Yet, the ideological veneer of relativism deletes these "imperfections" from anthropological scripts.

Let us recall Hicks' reaction after he tries to steady the coffin (to stop the corpse from falling out of it). He takes issue with one of the elders who intends to remove Hicks from the funeral cortège (since the dead soul was liable to take advantage of Hicks' presence to re-enter the body); Hicks' (1976: 1) scepticism (if not his humour!) embodied his response: "If all the soul wants is to return to the corpse, why should it bother me? I don't wish to prevent it." That this story was removed from the second edition of *Tetum Ghosts and Kin* (2004) is but one example of the progressive influence of cultural relativism on that ethnographer's depictions. His experience (or even his memory of experience) was ethnographically adjusted to suit the prevailing norm of epistemological symmetry. Had King produced a second edition of *Eden to Paradise* (1963a) decades hence, we can imagine how her revisions would have covered up the racial-epistemic prejudices that she incarnated daily in her field interactions. An accomplished cultural relativism, in contrast, pervades the work of Forman and Traube. But what expressions of racial difference are left untextualised by virtue of the relativistic orthodoxy, however culturally sensitive they aspired to be—and no doubt were—in their strange surrounds? Conversely, what expressions of situated

fairness, sensitivity and Lusotropical respect might remain obscured by colonial ethnography's persistent and, at the time, entirely ethical dismissal of superstition?

While the above observations appear to be local and incidental, they were nested in global politics. The United States coupled its post-war hegemony with a concerted effort to end colonialism (where it persisted) and secure neocolonial, economic and military domination based on global disparities between the researching West and the researched South. Anthropology became immersed in Cold War politics as "the West" vied with "the East" for domination of "the Third World" (the very coining of "the Third World" as a category reflected "First World" domination). Just as anthropology was conscripted into this global politics, anthropologists scurried to advance their intellectual, professional and economic interests within the emerging world order.

The wider political context exerted contradictory influences on the ethnographic representation in Forman's two main book chapters on the Makassae: in the first chapter, Forman (1980) renders the Makassae life paradigm in the present tense ("the ethnographic present"), which complemented his textual muteness on the Indonesian invasion of 1975 to create an overriding impression of depoliticised a-historicity. In the follow-up chapter, Forman (1981) presents similar ethnographic materials, yet in a tense (the simple past) that temporally and semantically corresponds to Forman's emphasis that Makassae culture could no longer have existed as it had done *at the time of fieldwork*; fully aware that the ethnographic present tense participated in political obfuscation, he issued his past-tense "corrective" chapter as "a commemoration of the Makassae system of production and exchange" (Forman 1981: 97).

The former chapter was published in James Fox's seminal publication *The Flow of Life* (1980) which from cover to cover was silent on the Indonesian invasion and its aftermath. (It is noteworthy that *Flow* contains bibliographic references as late as 1979.) Did Fox and the contributors just forget to mention the invasion, in unison, without a word about it between them? Or was Forman—alongside Traube and other contributors—editorially hushed? Fox, at the time, was at the Australian National University (ANU). For some at the ANU and beyond it, silence in public forums and publications was a necessary intellectual compromise to keep field sites inside Indonesia open to scholars and graduate students. Certainly, access to Indonesia weighed heavily on the mind of scholars of Indonesia, and some

found themselves banned for life from the country for their public criticism of Indonesia in East Timor. Apart from access to field sites, a gamut of other interests might have been at play, including institutional and funding relationships with governments, information and consultancy provided to intelligence agencies (without necessarily implying direct cooperation) as well as exchanges and personal relationships with Indonesian elites and universities. In some quarters, a deathly silence enveloped the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, insinuating an extensive network of collusion that stretched deep into Western governments, transnational corporations, military complexes, universities and scholarship.

To paraphrase sociologist Georg Simmel (1906), if social life is determined by the means to speak, it is equally conditioned by the means not to speak. Anthropology, inevitably, was implicated in the political manipulation of the ratio of knowledge to ignorance concerning East Timor. The four ethnographers of Part Two of this book each found their respective combinations of speaking and not speaking following the Indonesian invasion of East Timor: Forman and Traube were active and outspoken in their non-*Flow* publications and talks, while Hicks was restrained because of his continuing research elsewhere in Indonesia. King, least proficient in the racial and epistemic courtesy of cultural relativism, campaigned vigorously against human rights abuses committed in East Timor. In contrast, *The Flow of Life* (1980), with contributions from four scholars (Shepard Forman, Elizabeth Traube, Brigitte Clamagirand and Claudine Friedberg) of what was formerly Portuguese Timor, stands as an impeccable display of both cultural relativism and total silence. Why this silence? Can we speak of intellectual censorship?⁵

Some 200,000 East Timorese perished during the 24 years of Indonesian occupation. Since the Indonesian withdrawal from East Timor in 1999, the anthropology on Timor has been anything but silent. As a result of the sheer number of lives lost and the trauma afflicting many or most of those who survived, East Timor has become one of the most intensely moralised research destinations in the world. This exerts considerable power over contemporary scholarship. Two expressions of this moral impetus in the research have been a deep obeisance to cultural relativism and a thick layer of cultural (and ontological) essentialism that, as a righteous defence of "Timorese culture", seem to derive momentum and gravity from the injustices of the past. Combined, relativism and essentialism have permitted only limited insight into transformative animism today

as an encounter with outsiders, including ethnographers; reflexivity has fallen by the wayside and anthropology has lapsed back into scientific ennui.

Naturalism, Animism and New Animism

I have posited two arguments in relation to the structural transformation of animism: an interactive argument and a homology argument. The interactive argument is well supported in the case of Portuguese Timor: namely, animistic or *lulik* potencies were heightened, defended and assisted when threatened. While fairly obvious, hyper-, defensive and assisted animism add interpretive nuance to the idea that outside powers simply violate(d) and ultimately erode(d) the integral nature of cultures in general and animism in particular. The three sub-animisms can be positioned along a spectrum corresponding to the level of agency Timorese commanded vis-à-vis outsiders: hyper-animism represented a low, defensive animism a moderate, and assisted animism a high degree of Timorese agency in relation to the foreign subject. Accordingly, hyper-animism was mainly a consequence of interventionist colonial administration whereas assisted animism predominated in the context of post-war professional field anthropology given the cultural sensitivities of fieldworkers; defensive animism was common to both.

The more incisive homology argument says that growing colonial dominance and the associated feeling of vulnerability as well as the recognition of rewards associated with outsiders gave rise to the historical development of a structural extension of Timorese animism's ontic relationship with spirit others to colonial others (including ethnographers). Crucial to this argument is the historically specific, pacification-era shift in the balance of power from spirits to outsiders as well as from ritual authorities to political authorities. I have suggested that the emerging homology manifested sociologically in a 20th-century rapprochement of ritual (vis-à-vis spirits) and ceremony (vis-à-vis colonials). As colonials assumed the position of executive power, the ritual propitiation of spirits became subjected to the colonial regime. Distinguished colonials could then assume the sacred qualities of *lulik* or the foreboding ones of dangerous spirits. Timorese were also liable to make Catholic clergy homologous to their own animist priests while, later, professional ethnographers were mythologised as "wanderers" without kin and, therefore, susceptible to the attribution of a spiritual provenance.

The naturalistic ontology inherent in colonial ethnography and, to some degree, in professional anthropology, tends to conceal homologies that transcend, nominally, the natural and the supernatural realms. Naturalistic ontology imposes categorical fixity, non-relational epistemology and physical causality such that we moderns must work hard to understand phenomena in animistic terms. Amongst the case-ethnographers that have figured in this book, the colonial ethnographers were entirely beholden to naturalism. But despite appearances, so too were the professional ethnographers, more or less. In fact, the ethnographic styles shared a naturalism that kept their enterprises closely related. If colonial ethnography banished indigenous animism to the realm of "superstition" against "true scientific knowledge" or "true religion" (strangely unaware of the contradiction), professional ethnography cast "cultural practices" within the domain of "belief" vis-à-vis the same naturalistic worldview. The cultural and field politics of the non-colonial, professional ethnographic project, however, remained hidden behind the façade of cultural relativism that appeared to validate "cultural practices" and "indigenous belief" merely by deferring judgement and refraining from textualising epistemic asymmetries. The focus on areas such as ecology (which corroborated the scientific construct of Nature), symbolism (which denied emic preconceptions of causal relationships), metaphor (which claimed that things were not really so) and myths (which withheld the attribution of real history) presumed an ethno-naturalistic epistemological ascendancy over indigenous animism; it assumed the superiority of anthropological knowledge over those whom anthropologists studied and, by extension, the power of the modern ontology over animist ontology. Naturalism advanced the epistemological standards by which animism was analysed and made "other".

The hidden epistemological asymmetry of professional ethnography was (and still is) therefore akin—in fact homologous—to the overt evolutionary assumption embedded in colonial ethnography; the implicit intellectual hierarchies of the former were akin—also homologous—to the explicit racial ones they intended to replace. In kindred spirit, colonial and professional ethnography projected naturalism onto animism as a matter of course. Only on account of the naturalistic separation of the object of study (that is, animism) from the politics and relationships that gave rise to that object, could animism exist as an objectively knowable phenomenon. Simultaneously, animists translated naturalism through a projection of their animistic onto-logic onto naturalists, asymmetrically replicating their dealings

with spirits in their dealings with colonial others. Had colonials or foreigners not become powerful—both threatening and enabling—to Timorese, as their spirits long had been, the animist ontology would not have extended its embrace to colonials in the way it did and at the time that it did.

I now turn to the question of what this means for the discipline of anthropology as a whole. Anthropology in general has been trapped in naturalism just as it has pursued a conceptual transcendence. Forman (1980, 1981) and Traube (1986) found themselves in the midst of the “ontological turn” (as it related to animism) that had begun with Hallowell (1960) and would progressively unfold in researches of Descola (1992, 2015), Bird-David (1999), Ingold (2000), Harvey (2015), Bovensiepen (2014a), Århem and Sprenger (2016) among many others. “New animism” is emblematic of the struggle to transcend naturalistic ontology—this is what makes it “new” as opposed to the “old” framing of animism coined by Edward Tylor (1871). This is literally a struggle, because Cartesian naturalism is deeply entrenched. But what is hard to dislodge in theory (particularly the separation between Nature and Culture), is impossible to dislodge in practice. The fundamental asymmetry between us and them persists: Us, the authoritative, knowledge-globalising, universalising, ethnographising, ontologising and monograph-writing naturalists of mainly Western academics; Them, the belief-bound, researched and ethnographised animist-subjects who inhabit the woods of the dispersed “animistic archipelago”. Short of giving up on research altogether, none of us can hope to overcome the us/them divide beyond a few gestures.⁶

Meta-ethnography based on reflexive ethnography (and despite the reflexive masks) at least affords a critique of the us-and-them relationship that new animism, so far, has tended to avoid, preferring instead to concentrate its gaze on animism-as-object. Let us not forget that animism—old, new and in between—is nothing less than a product of all sorts of encounters—including ethnographic ones. To index this product as phenomena that are constantly changing, experienced and textualised in many different ways in relation to the presence of foreigners, I have put forward the idea of transformative animism. In reading backwards from text to experience, it strikes me that the study of ethnography (that is, meta-ethnography) as both literary text and field action promises to contribute to our appreciation of animism—animism as the object of study, the object of transformation and the object of representation.

Throughout colonial ethnography and professional ethnography in particular, myriad commonalities as well as contrasts come to the fore—experiential, administrative, diachronic, synchronic, descriptive, theoretical, reflexive, deceptive, strategic, vested, ethical, representational. The colonial and the professional thus fold into each other, not quite seamlessly, yet without the gross distinctions commonly attributed to them. This otherwise obfuscated confluence is made plain through the diachronic study of many animisms in the one place. The vertical, historicised study of animism might well complement “new animism” given the latter’s current interest in horizontal, comparative research (Århem and Sprenger 2016; Harvey 2015; Praet 2014).

Methodologically, meta-ethnography of animism, I believe, is better served by narrative than by science. Science traditionally strives for one truth and one total rendition of the object. As in this meta-ethnographic study of Portuguese Timor, many historically and thematically intersecting animisms arise. Following Tom Griffiths (2007: 5), narrative is “a way of allowing for multiplicity and complexity” and identifying discernible patterns. Although Griffiths calls narrative a highly refined science, I would add that it is highly refined precisely because it transcends the crude epistemological boundaries chartered by naturalistic ontology. Narrative in fact resembles animism. Both animism and narrative elicit relational epistemologies that resist dividing subject from object, storyteller from the story told. Narrative gets at feeling as well as cognition; it appreciates paradox and ambivalence; it enacts connectivity and situates questions of race, gender, sex and ethics more than it does rehearse academic scripts and intellectual piety. Narrative not only oscillates between many voices, it can admit to them: liberating, entertaining, (un)ethical, flippant, harsh, speculative, anthropomorphic. Implicit in narrative are moral conundrums, not dogmas. Narrative is less factual, less authoritative, less formulaic, less dry and monotone; it is more touching, memorable, poignant, challenging, shocking, and true to life. Meta-ethnographic storytelling offers an alternative pathway to understanding an animism that has only ever been empirically available through encounter experiences. One could therefore say that all animisms have always been, essentially, transformative animism.

Notes

Foreword

1. By the time the first proper colonial census was taken in 1914, the Portuguese empire had adopted the new international standards for enumeration of sex, marital status, age, race and nationality, but not religion.
2. Some colonial officials also noted the role of witches (*buan*) and witchcraft (*suanggi*), but this was typically treated on a threat by threat basis, without apparent appreciation for the historical context of witch cults throughout much of the archipelago.

Introduction

1. James G. Frazer's *Totemism* (1887) was translated into French by A. Dirr and Arnold van Gennep as *Le Totémisme*, published in 1898. Armando Pinto Correia consulted the French translation.
2. One may assume that the crocodile was destined for display at the museum in Baucau that Armando Pinto Correia had established. A few decades earlier, a crocodile killed in a swamp by a European was stuffed and placed in Dili's museum, after which Timorese—even Christians—would come to offer rice and betel to "the dead monster" (Castro 2004 [1910]: 420).
3. In developmental biology, both homology and analogy denote similarity in the structures (or organs) of two organisms; in the case of homology, the similarity derives from a common ancestor, whereas in the case of analogy there is an absence of common ancestry, presenting instead as a functional correspondence but not a hereditary one.
4. Other significant works on these topics include: Andrade (1907), Branco and Câmara (1915), Cardoso (1937), Carvalho (1937), Correia (1944), Duarte (1930, 1944), Leitão (1929), Lencastre (1929, 1931a), Magalhães (1909, 1918, 1920), Metello (1923), Morais (1934), Silva (1908) and Silva (1910). Correia (1934: 355–8) offers a bibliography of the Portuguese ethnography of the period including numerous minor reports by missionaries and military commanders. See also: Ricardo Roque's "History and Anthropology of Portuguese Timor,

1850–1975. An Online Dictionary of Biographies”, available at <http://www.historyanthropologytimor.org/>; Frederico Delgado Rosa (2012) on the ethnography of missionaries; Lúcio Sousa (2014) on the “practical reach” of ethnography from 1894–1917. This predominantly pragmatic in situ Timorese ethnography also lent information and raw materials—including craniums—for a more theoretical “armchair” academic “ethnography” (or “ethnology”) in Portuguese universities. The most influential man in this respect was António Augusto Mendes Correia of the University of Porto (see Roque 2010a, 2012a, 2018).

5. Here, I am not referring to the non-naturalistic, relativist theoretical frameworks of anthropologists; nor am I excluding the possibility that colonials were superstitious. Rather, I refer to deeply held convictions of how the world works in scientific terms (and not who created it in religious terms).
6. Totemism means that different cultural groups identify their origins with particular animals, plants or parts of landscape (Bovensiepen 2014a: 127; Cinatti et al. 1987: 36; Schulte Nordholt 1971: 92). For Philippe Descola (2015 [2006]: 79), totemism occupies a separate category to animism. For the purposes of this book, it is sufficient to understand totemism as an aspect of animism.

Chapter 1

1. As a member of the Batavia Society for Arts and Science, Afonso de Castro had articles published in its periodical (Schouten 2001b: 205; see, for example, Castro 1863). These works would come to form part of *As Possessões Portuguezas na Oceania* (1867).
2. This existence of a volcano would not be definitively refuted until the 20th century (Martinho 1943: 108). It would appear that Lake Ira Lalaro of some 19 square kilometres was unknown at the time. Wrote Alberto Osório de Castro in 1910: “It is true that the recent expedition of Captain Carrazedo to Lautém led to the discovery of a large lake in the interior of the territory in the far east of the island” (Castro 2004: 501). Castro was likely referring to José Carrazedo de Sousa, Lautém’s military commander, who led a campaign against Tutuala and surrounding areas in 1908 and 1909 (Chamberlain 2017: 22).
3. The lengthy memorandum entitled “Instruções do Conde de Sarzedas” (1811) was written by a viceroy of Goa for an incoming governor of Portuguese Timor. The document is reproduced in Castro (2010: 185–220). See Douglas Kammen (2017: 127).
4. One may well question Castro’s political categories. The Portuguese may have appropriated the term *suco* from the eastern Tetum-speaking population, for whom *fukun* referred to localised clans or descent groups, after which they mapped the term uniformly onto the whole

territory. Whatever the origin of *suco*, they projected an overly territorialised model onto what colonials were at pains to recognise, namely the ritually connected communities whose unity was not so much *located* in clearly demarcated spaces (with all space accounted for) as they were *related* in origin houses and descent groups (with empty spaces in between) (Traube 1986: 100–1, drawing on David Hicks 1976: 4–7). Even the Dutch ethnographer of western Timor, F.A.E. van Wouden (1968), “himself was vague regarding the association between *suku* and clan”, Traube adds (1986: 259n2), and “later research indicates that the term *suku* or *fukun* refers in some societies to descent groups, and in others to territorial units”. Kammen (2017: 126) is more definitive: “village-level administrative units (*suco*) were fundamentally foreign impositions” taken originally from Viqueque; Kammen links this to the Portuguese consolidation of the system of “indirect rule”, observing that the new administrative terminology was adopted and accepted in those areas where indirect rule was achieved (see p. 129 for details). While the evidence points to such an imposition, no scholar (to my knowledge) has detailed the process of the extension of administrative categories. One oddity, picked up by Kammen (2017: 128), appears towards the end of Castro’s book: Castro (2010: 429) wrote that in Timor there are neither nucleated villages like the *desa* of Java, nor are there land-based labour units like Java’s *tjatja*, but rather patriarchal families and hamlets, called *aldeia*, “which could be used to serve our purposes” so that we “do not have to send in soldiers and a lot of employees to implement our policies”. The quoted clauses are as close as I come to finding a statement that refers to what Kammen (2017: 132) calls a “strategy adopted by the governors in Dili in the mid-19th century”.

5. Shepard Forman (1977: 97) observes: “Careful examination of historical and ethno-historical materials is likely to show that our conceptions of political and economic order in early Southeast Asia are not necessarily accurate either. This is because European historiography and ethnography often posit their own order, their own sense of reality, on diverse and disparate data.” Forman (p. 100, 103) saw the “indigenous states” of Timor (referring to the “provinces” of Bellos and Servião) as “a product of Portuguese and Dutch historiography”. In another part of his text, Castro (2010: 361) directly compares Timorese politics to Europe in the middle ages (Kammen 2017: 127). See also Hans Hägerdal (2012: 57–60).
6. A camp-master or *mestre de campo* (adopted from the French) was a superior officer in command of a military unit equivalent to a regiment or corps in the Portuguese Army from the 1600s to the 1800s. The rank of camp-master was roughly equivalent to colonel.

7. In Geoffrey Hull's *Standard Tetum–English Dictionary* (2002: 80), *estilu* is an “animist funeral sacrifice”.
8. That the Timorese people could then “live under the protection of the Portuguese” and that Portugal thus “acquired subjects” implies Henk Schulte Nordholt's (1971: 163–4) interpretation, that kingdoms such as Mena permitted their “christening” in 1640 in order to separate themselves from tribute dues of other dominating groups by forging an alliance with the Portuguese (see also Henley 2002).
9. In Hull (2002: 337) *suau* and *suangi* are the Tetum terms for “sorcerer”. The Tetum term *buau* is rendered “witch” and “sorceress”.

Chapter 2

1. Henry and Anna Forbes happened to board the same steamer as the França family after they left the Netherlands. On the voyage, Bento da França extended a warm invitation to Forbes to visit Portuguese Timor, offering him “whatever assistance [he] might need, should [he] desire to investigate the interior of the island” (Forbes 1884: 402). See also Roy Ellen (1978).
2. Forbes (1989: 426) added that he was not sure whether these were dialects or languages, but that “in some districts the people did not understand the speech of their neighbours”. In an appendix (p. 490), Forbes presents a list of the main dialects or languages. In their original spellings, these are: Mambai or Kaladi; Tetu; Idate; Lakalé; Haukenke; Veke; Vaiqueno; Galolo; Marai; Manobai; Kemak; Tocudade; Dagada; Macassai; Naubete; and Meadik.
3. Rod Nixon (2013: 171) reports of a case, documented in 1871, in which the *liurai* of Vemasse ordered two families to be put to death on account of sorcery, which the commander of that area, Lieutenant José dos Santos Vaquinhas, prevented: the *liurai* was fined and ordered to supply 50 men for labour, while those exhorted to commit the crime were detained. The rescued families moved to Dili. See also Correia (1934: 320n2).
4. It is impossible to know what kind of explanation would have pleased this intelligent *liurai*, but his dissatisfaction with Henry's answer that “Maromak made it so” might be taken to mean that he expected a physical, causal explanation. I should note that animism is not anathema to determining physical causality; it rather looks for underlying spiritual causation precisely in the face of adversity; that the compass pointed north was probably nothing more than a curiosity. (On Maromak, meaning both the Christian God and indigenous deity, see: pp. 63–4, 106 and 194 in this volume; see also Traube 1986: 264n10.)

5. It is not clear that enemy heads were ever sent “home” to restore peace, although Nixon (2013: 169–70) has read Forbes literally. Forman (1980: 343n18), for example, notes that the head of an enemy was cut and hung in a tree so that its spirit could not undergo “multiple burial and ascension”. Schulte Nordholt (1971: 352–3) states that the subsequent ritual treatment of heads was intended to incorporate the head—and therefore the spirit too—into the community. José Martinho (1943: 17) observed that, after the funerals, warriors stored the heads around sacred trees and caves and so, as “war trophies”, the heads “found in certain regions and in particular spots are never those of the local inhabitants ... but rather belong to the enemy kingdoms”.

Chapter 3

1. For a history of the progressive reach and efficiency of the census from the mid 19th century to the early 20th century, see Kammen (2017: 130–3).
2. The correct date of publication of *Flores de Coral* is 1910, although both 1908 and 1909 appear in the book itself (Cinatti and Oliveira 1973: 31; Pereira 2004: 22–3).
3. The ethnographic research was not sustained, however, given the forthcoming War of Manufahi (1911–12) and perhaps even the premature departure of Osório de Castro. Not until 1916 and 1917 would reports on Ataúro, Maubara, Motael, Aipêlo and Liquiçá be published in the colonial gazette. See Kammen (2015: 204n49, n50) and Sousa (2014: 38n28) for details.
4. The quote is drawn from his section “Ethnographie, folklore”, *Mercur de France*, no. 15, February 1907.
5. Joseph Arthur de Gobineau published *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* in 1853, thus foreshadowing a long era of thought on race and the emergence of scientific racism.
6. A few earlier ethnographers associated *pomal(i)* and *luli(k)*, but for them it was of little significance whether the terms were endogenous or not. Vaquinhas (1885: 488), for example, implies that the Timorese themselves used both *pomal* and *luli*.
7. Osório de Castro let *múti-salas* stand untranslated. In Hull's Tetum–English dictionary (2002: 255), *mutisalas* are “red bartering beads”. In Hélio A. Esteves Felgas (1956: 169n55): “*mutissalas* are small stones (precious for the Timorese) in the form of opaque and yellow beads of various shades. They are imported, and sell at a high price. Armando Pinto Correia calculated that a thread of beads two hands in length was worth five buffalo: ‘Cords of *mutissalas* are almost always part of the dowry’”.

8. Mr Barreto was a Timorese of the aristocratic (*dato*) class, and of mixed Goan and Timorese parentage. He had received a Portuguese education in Macau and now held a high position in Dili in the Customs Department.
9. Captain Fonseca Cardoso had been the secretary of the journal *Portugália*, and was the first Portuguese “physical anthropologist” to visit Timor (Castro 2004: 409). He arrived in 1908 with the new governor, Eduardo Augusto Marques, but later died of malaria.
10. The original transcription of the sung verse in southern Tetum reads: *Lúllic nèn, La Lúllic tudúc hida. Lúllic, mánàs! La Lúllic tudúc hida.* [...] It was then translated into standard Tetum and then English as: *Lulik nen* [The six sacred]; *La lulik tuduk ida* [Are not really sacred]; *Lulik, manas* [The sacred is hot]; *La lulik tuduk ida* [It is not really sacred].
11. The English translation is from the Portuguese translation of the local language transcription (see Castro 2004: 497).
12. The second and third verses read as follows: *Tànissèn mamàtè; Tàniss!: Mamòrin mamàtè; Tàniss!; Maichidi lalálan; Açà sòruc ba!; Maichidi lalálan; Làha sòruc ba!* Osório de Castro gave no translation from southern Tetum into Portuguese. A native speaker of southern Tetum was unable to offer a coherent translation.
13. The Portuguese *loroçá* is rendered *loresaa* or *loresaan* in Tetum, and is defined in Hull (2002: 224–5) as a “chant sung around the severed heads of enemies killed in a war”; *lore* is the “war-dance in which men brandish weapons”.
14. Numerous elements of Osório de Castro’s descriptions can also be found in Henk G. Schulte Nordholt (1971: 348–53), based on the earlier work of P. Middelkoop.
15. The original transcription of the quatrain reads as follows: *Mau Béssi dicul, Tarà bé-háli; Dicul bálu sui tássi, Bálu sui fohó!* A native speaker of southern Tetum updated the spelling and translated the verse: *Mau Besi dikur* [The jaws of two seas are in Mau Besi]; *Tara We Hali.* [The Great and Sacred Kingdom of We Hali]; *Dikur balu sui tasi,* [One jaw to the South, i.e., Tasi Mane]; *Balu sui foho* [Another to the North, i.e. Tasi Feto]. Citing Osório de Castro, Correia (1944: 51n1, 56n2) reproduces this and other examples of ritual speech, changing spelling and accents. On the *loroçá* in particular, Correia regretted that Osório did not note the area where he recorded the ritual and that his translation “could not be trusted as it was based on verse that Osório de Castro himself described as ‘almost incomprehensible’”.
16. The acquired ill-repute is, of course, a reference to Zola’s (an alias for António Pádua Correia) indictment of José Celestino da Silva; high corruption among Portuguese colonial officials and slavery on

the plantations were among the recriminations levelled at him (see Clarence-Smith 1992; Zola 1911).

17. Its suitability was indeed confirmed, and the experimental station would become the hub of the first Government Farm, the Granja Eduardo Marques, named after the governor.

Chapter 4

1. Throughout the pacification war years, the boundaries of the military districts and their headquarters shifted according to military strategy. Under Celestino da Silva there were 20 military districts (Pt.: *comandos militares*). In 1908, those were reduced to 15: Batugadé (whose headquarters later shifted to Balibó); Bobonaro; Maubara; Liquiçá; Aipêlo; Central do Oeste (later, Hatolia); Manufahi; Central do Sul (which replaced Alas, with headquarters in Bibiçuçu); Central do Norte (headquarters in Motael, later transferred to Aileu, which became the district name and bordered on Dili); Remexio; Manatuto; Baucau; Viqueque; Lautém; and Oecusse (headquarters in Pante Makassar). Maubara and Aipêlo were then subsumed by Liquiçá, Remexio was incorporated into Aileu, and Central do Sul or Alas joined Manufahi. In 1910, there were ten districts. After the War of Manufahi (1912), two new military districts were created: Suro (headquarters in Ainaro) and Covalima, bringing the total to twelve (Martinho 1945: 24–6). (All the while, kingdoms could be transferred from one jurisdiction to another —see K. Davidson 1994: 235.) In 1920–21, Liquiçá, Manatuto and Baucau were converted into civil districts (Pt.: *circunscrições civis*). In 1929, the configuration consisted of Dili and Ataúro, the *conselho*, nine military districts (Bobonaro, Covalima, Manufahi, Suro, Hatolia, Motael, Viqueque, Lautém and Oecusse) and three civil districts (Liquiçá, Manatuto and Baucau). In 1934 all remaining military districts became civil districts, a total of 13, including Dili (Felgas 1956: 320).
2. Kathryn Robinson (2004: 380) noted Australian anthropology's broadening research focus on Asia-Pacific as "a consequence of Australia's new sense of its strategic interests in the post-World War II period".
3. Because *suco* chiefs (*chefes de suco*) came to be called *liurai*, Kammen (2017: 135) uses the term "capital L Liurai" to distinguish those minor chiefs from the old kingdom-level Liurai; the former "continued to parade as *regulos* [little kings], though they were in fact little more than clerks with an ego and a whip in the service of the state". I use the "capital L Liurai" to refer particularly to the emergent class of wealthy, land-owning post-kingdom Liurai, who turn up in various parts of this book.

4. One reference mentions the author's presence on Ataúro in 1909 (Martinho 1943: 170); a second reference to that year indicates that he, somewhere, sometime, had seen dead bodies kept inside a house without having undergone burial for half a century (Martinho 1945: 250).
5. The governor at the time was Alfredo Cardoso Soveral Martins; confirmation of the Republic came from the warship *S. Gabriel* just as Martins' wife died tragically during childbirth; both events pushed him out of Timor shortly afterwards.
6. The primary cause of the revolt is often attributed to Governor Filomeno da Câmara increasing the head tax in 1911. Davidson (1994: 249–50, 276) argues that the revolt was brought on more by a general Timorese resentment of the ever-increasing colonial control over land and labour at the expense of the power of indigenous elites as well as the freedom of commoners. On the interference of foreigners, Davidson continues (p. 75), "there is no evidence that the Dutch instigated the revolt" despite "a strong inclination on behalf of their military commanders on the border to become involved in the uprising once it had started".
7. Martinho (1943: 120n1) defined *estilo* as the "pagan ceremony or indigenous feast, familiar or public, which may entail dance, drumming, animal sacrifice, song and chant, presided over by the *rai lulik* [ritual priest]"; he also corrected the ethnographic record on the function of the *rai lulik* who was "not a healer but a diviner" (p. 259).
8. Júlio Lencastre's praise of communal plantations might have been a vindication of former Republicanism, a defence of his own plantation prowess or an expression of self-importance. After the planting out of Mundo Perdido with coffee in 1915 and 1916, the project failed because the soils were too alkaline. Communal plantations, in general, turned out to be a spectacular flop for a range of environmental and social reasons (Carvalho 1937; Silva 1956: 45).
9. On rich chiefs or Liurai, see Correia (1934: 272–3n3).
10. On colonial portrayals of native sexual practices, Kammen (2015: 37) advises to "be careful with ... colonial sources for which it can be difficult to distinguish accurate reporting from perverse colonial fantasies about indigenous life".

Chapter 5

1. See Correia (1934: 346–7) for the full list.
2. There were, however, considerable tensions and rivalries between civil administrators and military commanders. See António Metello (1923) and Christopher Shepherd and Andrew McWilliam (2014).
3. Correia's naming of *barare* resembles Forman's (1980: 341n5) note about *modo bere* which are rituals for "big men" and stand in contrast to *darnini*, rituals for "ordinary folks".

4. Correia (1934: 68n1) explained that Makassae was the most widely spoken language in the district of Baucau, but that Uaimaa was spoken in some villages surrounding Baucau, Bercoli and Venilale; Galoli extended from Manatuto to Vemassee; and Midique and Nauete were dialects spoken in certain villages of Venilale.
5. Martinho's (1943: 129) view of name-changing was similar to that of Osório de Castro's, and could have been copied from it: "A child need do no more than sob inconsolably and the mother starts to pronounce one name after another, and will stay with the name that is uttered at the point the child eventually shuts up."
6. Opportunities for changes of name presented themselves continuously, for not only was sickness a frequent occurrence but breastfeeding often extended into the third year of a child's life. See Martinho (1943: 192).

Chapter 6

1. See Teófilo Duarte (1930): on Dominicans and Salesians, pp. 25, 371; on sexual abuse, pp. 76–8, 227–8, 368; on mission schools, p. 228; on prayer, shallow Christianisation and the incapacity of priests, p. 367–9.
2. Martinho (1943: 259) would correct the ethnographic record on the function of the *rai lulik*, who was "not a healer but a diviner".
3. Portugal's National Dictatorship (Pt.: *Ditadura Nacional*) came into existence in 1926, and in 1933 became the New State (Pt.: *Estado Novo*).
4. Expressions of the superficial, perfunctory, pragmatic and political character of Christianity among the Timorese were common. Vaquinhas (1885: 488) had written: "The Timorese become Christians for convenience and remain pagans by conviction, and many simply become baptised to have a godfather"; "pagan customs always pervade Christianity". (See Castro 2010: 28–9; Correia 1934: 101–2n3.)

Chapter 7

1. Stemming from Gilberto Freyre's views on Portuguese colonialism, Lusotropicalism describes an ideal of racial democracy in the Portuguese colonies. Menezes (1968) himself, who lived in Portuguese Timor between 1958 and 1971, was a vocal proponent of this view.
2. This webpage shows footage of a rice ceremony (filmed in Bobonaro in 1953). Here, one can appreciate, most vividly, Margaret King's portrayal of beauty in such dancing festivities: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x29xeb1_timor-neli-dance-in-bobonaro-1953_shortfilms.
3. The humorous tone may hide the truth behind the anecdote. In another report, King (1965: 117) elaborates: "The Timorese of this area display a reverence and fear toward these crocodiles and should a woman be taken by one of them, her male relatives consider this to be a sign that

- the ancestor is so well pleased with her that he wishes to take her for a wife. If a male is seized he is usually considered to have offended his crocodile ancestor by displaying too much arrogance in his manhood.”
4. Elsewhere King (1965: 111n2) reasons: “Bearing in mind numerous reports of other substitution sacrificial rites throughout the world, and the fact that I was unable to obtain any precise information from alternative sources to confirm or deny this statement, suggests it may be a rationalisation developed over a considerable period of time. It is doubtful that the edict against human sacrifice could have been successfully imposed on the Timorese prior to the complete pacification of the island by the Portuguese in 1913.”
 5. For footage of a *loroçá* war dance, filmed in 1953 in Ainaro, see: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x29xd24_loro-sai-dance-in-ainaro-timor-1953_shortfilms.
 6. Draft typescript of *Eden to Paradise*, State Library of South Australia Archives, Mountford-Sheard Collection, PRG 1447, Series 7.
 7. King translates *rai lulic* as “a type of high priest of animist ceremonies, and *matan dooc* as a “form of witch-doctor” (p. 16).

Chapter 8

1. I understand that Maria Olímpia Lameiras-Campagnolo was born and raised in Portugal, but later became a French national.
2. Claudine Friedberg would later state that the objective of the French-Portuguese Ethnological Mission was “to gather data on societies that could be considered variants of van Wouden’s model, and to represent the original form of Indonesian social organisation” (cited in Castelo 2017: 10). In her major monograph, *Marobo: une société ema de Timor* (1982), Brigitte Renard-Clamagirand offers no information at all concerning her experiences in the field. After the first phase of research in 1966, the French-Portuguese Ethnological Mission of Portuguese Timor ran into a second phase in 1969, albeit without the participation of the team supervisor, Louis Berthe, who had died. See Claudia Castelo (2017) and Hicks (2017).
3. What Hicks calls “princedom”, I call *suku* or *suco* (Pt.). Hicks used the term “village” to mean what would today be called the *aldeia* or sub-village. I have kept Hicks’ use of the term “village” for this chapter, despite the inconsistency with other chapters of this book, where “village” is synonymous with *suku*.
4. Cinatti, having come to Timor to supervise the French team of anthropologists, paid Hicks a surprise visit in Viqueque, since he had heard that Hicks was unhappy with his field site. Cinatti accompanied Hicks to Bibileu and also offered him a couple of alternative field sites. By that stage, however, Hicks was disinclined to relocate (Hicks 2017: 41–2).

5. The *Explorations in World Ethnography* series was one of four major ethnography series of the period. Edited by Robert B. Edgerton and L.L. Langness and published by Mayfield, the series projected a total of twelve volumes, but only six were issued (Maring 1979: 631).
6. We see in *A Voz do Crente* (1887), that missionary activity in the region between 1877 and 1886 was sporadic or barely existent (see Kammen 2017: 129). In Viqueque specifically, priests performed 104 baptisms (100 of which were of infants), one marriage and no burials. With the establishment of the Soibada Mission in 1900 until its virtual closure in 1910, missionary activity in Viqueque would have certainly increased, but remained intermittent.
7. Explicitly acknowledged are the researches of his doctoral student, Toby Fred Lazarowitz (1980), and German geographer Joachim Metzner (1977). One might wonder how Hicks could not have been influenced by Renard-Clamagirand (1982), Forman (1980, 1981) and Traube (1980, 1986).
8. In response to a draft of this chapter, David Hicks wrote that in 1983 he had been taken for a ghost when wandering alone in a forest on Flores Island. (I had a similar experience in West Timor.) Elizabeth Traube thought that my conjectures about Hicks' ghostly status "made sense" or were, at least, "an intriguing interpretation ... consistent with a broad set of Timorese associations between Europeans and the dead". Methodologically and animistically, in my view, what really warrants justification is not that Hicks may have been taken for a ghost, but rather that he may not have been.

Chapter 9

1. Shepard Forman took a formative interest in anthropological ethics. Immediately prior to his research in Timor, military dictatorship in Brazil (1964–85) had motivated him to collaborate with other colleagues to establish COPHEAR—Committee on Potentially Harmful Effects of Anthropological Research. (Personal communication with Shepard Forman, 24 June 2017.) On ethics debates of the period, see Robinson (2004: 385).
2. Forman read successive drafts of "his" chapter. My critique that his ethnography understated the degree of real acculturation was, he insisted, incorrect. I accommodated his position, verging closer to his view that his Makassae of Matebian were relatively "intact". Our conversations inspired Forman to go through all his old notes and photographs. In a final email (7 April 2018), he wrote: "So many missed anthropological opportunities are appearing in our diaries and photos, including a Catholic marriage we attended among other things. Maybe, no, more than maybe, ethnographic fieldwork is as selective as memory." To some degree, I maintain my original position, holding

that Forman's holistic culturalism led him to overlook and ignore a considerable level of acculturation. (Why, for example, was the aforementioned Catholic marriage never considered in his writing?) It is hard for a meta-ethnographer to argue against the subject-ethnographer about the degree of acculturation at his or her own field site. I encountered the same difficulty by initially presenting Elizabeth Traube's ritual centres as "*tiny* islands of tradition". Throughout the writing of the chapters on Forman (Chapter Nine) and Traube (Chapter Ten), I tried not to exaggerate the degree of acculturation; but nor did I want to lose sight of the fact that their methods were conducive to the exaggeration of cultural wholeness.

3. Initially, Forman mentioned to me in a personal communication that he thought dropping his informant from co-authorship was an editorial decision but he could not remember any details of a conversation about it. Did James Fox hold that adding informants as co-authors was empty symbolism, perhaps?

Chapter 10

1. Every ethnographer, myself included, knows when he or she is relying on local affections to get data, and presenting oneself as (or perhaps genuinely being) an immensely sympathetic soul for ethnographic gain (see Fine 1993). Of course, data is not everything: it may also be about getting love, assuaging loneliness or enjoying the privilege, status and attention that outsiders at their field sites often do. It is usually not "a fair exchange", as King (1963a: 173) suggested, but an asymmetrical one with benefits, gratifications, disappointments or heartbreak flying in all directions.
2. Traube notes that for her "general inexperience" as well as for all she had heard about the Mambai—their distrust, secrecy and guardedness regarding their traditions—she was very nearly scared away in the beginning. "It later struck me as highly symbolic," she footnotes (1980: 292, 352n3), "that one of those rare, early moments of communication and laughter that the Mambai and I experienced hinged on an open discussion of their celebrated secretiveness and the mutual fear we felt of one another."
3. Semen, Traube found, was overlooked. One day, Traube burst out to Mau Balen and Mau Bere: "But if it is all just milk, then doesn't the man give anything toward making a baby?" The men, she says, may have been overcome by her stupidity, although after that it became easier to "discuss sexuality" than it had been at first (Traube 1980: 310, 355n26).
4. This theme had been raised by other anthropologists of Timor Island, including Shulte Nordholt (1971) and Friedberg in relation to the Atoni and Bunak respectively (Traube 1986: 251n16).

5. "Tribute tax" is a general term. I think it may refer to either—or both—of the following: the former produce tax (*finta*) paid by the kingdoms to the Portuguese, abolished in the early 20th century in favour of the head tax, whose first general collection was in 1908; the "land tax" (*rai teen*) paid to chiefs by commoners, also abolished around the same time (see Castro 2010: 69, 376–8; Kammen 2015: 99; Schlicher 1996: 270).
6. After reading a draft of this chapter, Elizabeth Traube spoke about her personal relationship with her two informants during her 1973–74 fieldwork at a conference in Brasilia, Brazil, hosted by the Timor-Leste Studies Association, 9–11 July 2018. She said: "Mau Bere took my breath away from the first moment I noticed him at a Hohul house ceremony. In my book [*Cosmology and Social Life*], I wrote as if he came to my attention solely as a man who 'had words' ... But before [we actually spoke], I had watched him with intense pleasure. It was early afternoon, the priests had just performed the day's rites, and he had joined in the dancing that followed, still dressed in the faded cloth that he wore while supervising the material construction of one of the houses. His beauty was arresting; he reminded me of a former boyfriend from home, and I stood at the edge of the dancing ground, snapping photos of him, which I still have. No doubt he noticed; that evening, he came to witness a meeting Mau Balen had scheduled with one of the Hohul priests. In the book, I wrote that he was asked to pour the liquor and that people seemed to respect him; I still vividly recall a detail that I omitted: that when he was seated across from me, I surreptitiously removed the elastic band that was holding back my hair. When I asked him ... if he would consider becoming my second assistant, it was not only because he had proved himself as a man 'with words'; the erotic charge I felt in his company was so energizing that I could scarcely imagine continuing my fieldwork without him." As for Mau Balen, it appears that Traube was not in love with him; how much he was in love with her, or even just sexually interested, was something Traube and I discussed in emails. Initially she was skeptical of my insistence that he too was in love, but, she later conceded that their relationship and the question were more complicated than she initially assumed (personal communications, June and July 2018).

Conclusion

1. McWilliam (2007: 1136) describes an event that conforms to this schema. In 1986 and 1987, when the indigenous authorities of the northeastern coastal town of Com were required to hand over their anchorage for port development, instead of monetary compensation they requested of the Indonesian authorities the resources for a ritual sacrifice such that the spirits would grant their consent to the development

and “ensure the safety of the government and local residents in their development plans”. McWilliam suggests that this “served to *reinforce* the ritual authority ... at Com while *nominally* ceding executive power to determine development futures” [emphasis added]; by replacing the words “reinforce” with “politicise”, and “nominally” with “really”, we end up with a statement that accords with my homology argument—executive power was *really* ceded and ritual authority fell into line. The ritual authorities asked the Indonesians to provide the resources, McWilliam adds, presumably in the form of sacrificial animals. In the postcolonial period, outsiders’ provision of ritual resources would become standard, such as in state- or NGO-instituted land management and cultural revival programmes that characteristically combined ceremony and ritual in what one might call “opportunistic animism”. See McWilliam, Palmer and Shepherd (2014); Shepherd (2009, 2014).

2. In Sahlins’ (1985) explanation of Captain James Cook’s murder in Hawaii, Cook had unwittingly assumed a mythological character. Returning to the island at a time in contravention of myth, he was killed accordingly. Traube was similarly—mythologically—identified with the colonial tax through the “structure of the conjuncture” elicited by her presence. (See also McWilliam, Palmer and Shepherd 2014.)
3. These associations, she says, were something she never wrote about and felt she never properly understood. (Personal communication with Elizabeth Traube, August 2017). Martinho had also discovered a link between foreigners and reincarnation in Timor—“the soul of a white man will be reincarnated as a dog” (cited in Correia 1934: 237).
4. Implying that *lulik* objects remained in King’s possession, King’s daughter noted that these were kept secret and any artefacts were not displayed or discussed “unless they were too big to ignore, like statues and drums, where the word *lulic* became familiar to us, meaning ‘serious, special, magic, hands-off reverence-required’”. The necklace itself was said to be stolen after King died. (Personal communication with Mia Stephens, 14 August 2017.)
5. Between 2 and 15 May 2018, Shepard Forman, David Hicks, James Fox and Elizabeth Traube responded to what I had proposed in an earlier draft concerning *The Flow of Life*’s “display of intellectual censorship”. Fox wrote that my comments on *The Flow of Life* (1980) were “completely wrong”, there was no “intellectual censorship” and “none of us, and certainly not myself, gave a thought to what the Indonesian government would say about the book”. Hicks thought that my arguments were “speculative”, and he observed that the series of ethnographies in *The Flow of Life* were intended “as such” (that is, as ethnographies), not as “historical essays or tracts with political commentaries”; the ethnographic present tense was “completely apt”, he said, and still is. Traube said: “*Flow*’s silence on the invasion certainly speaks volumes—but I’m not exactly sure what it says.” She could not

recall any "explicit hushing". She noted that it was "more the tacit 'understanding' of boundaries that was still sustained by the disciplinary culture of the time"—a culture that said that "ethnography is ethnography, not history and politics", to paraphrase Hicks' disciplinary reification.

My revised position is that disciplinary boundaries would have been easily and strategically invoked to maintain silence or, as the case may be, subtly influence others to be silent, when certain "other" interests (for example, access to field sites) were at stake. Disciplinary boundaries were clearly flexible and certainly not all-determinative: Forman reminded me that his 1981 book chapter on East Timor was intended as a "corrective" to the one he had published in *The Flow of Life* (1980); he realised that "the ethnographic present was a disservice and an obfuscation". In this, he reflected critiques that were emerging at the time (see Fabian 1983). Why, one must ask, did disciplinary boundaries apply at certain times and not at other times? Why could ethnography be "just ethnography" one moment, and ethnography *and* politics, the next?

It is open to question to what extent silence or silencing was part of ANU anthropology in the 1980s and 1990s, beyond the single publication of *The Flow of Life*. (One of the abovementioned four respondents, however, confirmed my supposition of the existence of an institutionalised silence there; another one implied the same.) More important than *Flow*, though, is what *Flow* says about the potentially fraught location of anthropology in such situations, and the variable influence of (inter)national, institutional, academic locations, historically specific disciplinary conventions, collegial alliances (as I discovered!), personal ethics, fieldwork experiences, the defence of professional identities and individual attributes. However, I take Hicks' sobering point that not every scholar of East Timor was obliged to join in "the deafening public outcry". Even now, having backed away from my earlier stance on censorship (but only for lack of direct evidence), I do not know whether I have read too much into *Flow's* silence, but I am reassured by Traube's remark that silence speaks volumes.

6. Gestures and pretences include "engaged anthropology", "giving back to communities", sharing authorship with informants, translating monographs into local languages, seeking out in-country participants in our discourses, researches and workshops. Some of these are worthy subjects for research in transformative animism, furthermore, because they are not without intercultural effects. One might suspect, however, that their main function is to shore up the moral credentials of researchers in grant applications and before ethics committees in order to, ultimately, secure the funding to permit the research that reasserts the us/them divide.

Glossary and Abbreviations

<i>aldeia</i> (Pt.)	village
BCAeF	<i>Boletim de Comércio, Agricultura e Fomento da Província de Timor</i> (Bulletin of Commerce, Agriculture and Promotion of the Province of Timor)
BEDM	<i>Boletim Eclesiástico da Diocese de Macau</i> (Ecclesiastical Bulletin of the Diocese of Macau)
<i>buan</i>	witch, sorcerer
<i>circunscrição civil</i>	civil district
<i>dato</i>	aristocratic native ruler, noble
<i>dato luli, dato lulik</i>	high ritual priest, "sorcerer of the kingdom"
<i>estilo</i> (Pt.)	ritual, ceremony
<i>faluno</i> (Makassae)	sacred
<i>feiticeiro</i> (Pt.)	sorcerer, witchdoctor, healer
<i>hakoi mate</i>	burial ceremony, funerary rite
<i>liurai</i>	secular chief, kingdom ruler
Liurai	elite, wealthy chiefs (who emerged after the War of Manufahi)
<i>loroçá</i>	war song, war chant
<i>luli, lulic, lulik</i>	sacred, taboo, prohibition; in colonial ethnography, a sacred object, a spirit
<i>malai, malaia</i>	foreigners, outsiders
<i>matan dook</i>	traditional healer, diviner
<i>mestiça</i> (Pt.), <i>mestiço</i>	mestizo
<i>nai lulik</i>	ritual priest, pagan priest
<i>pomal, pomali</i>	sacred, sacred house

<i>posto</i> (Pt.)	military post
<i>povoação</i> (Pt.)	clan, hamlet, village
<i>rai luli, rai lulic, rai lulik</i>	ritual priest, sorcerer, withdoctor
<i>rai na 'in</i>	land owner, land sprit, nature, spirit, demon
<i>reino</i> (Pt.)	kingdom
SAPT	Sociedade Agrícola Pátria e Trabalho
<i>suang, swangi</i>	sorcerer
<i>suanguice</i> (Pt.)	sorcery
<i>suco</i> (Pt.), <i>suku</i>	village, principdom
<i>tabedai, tebedai, Tabédu</i>	dance
<i>usos e costumes</i> (Pt.)	customs, habits, practices and customs

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